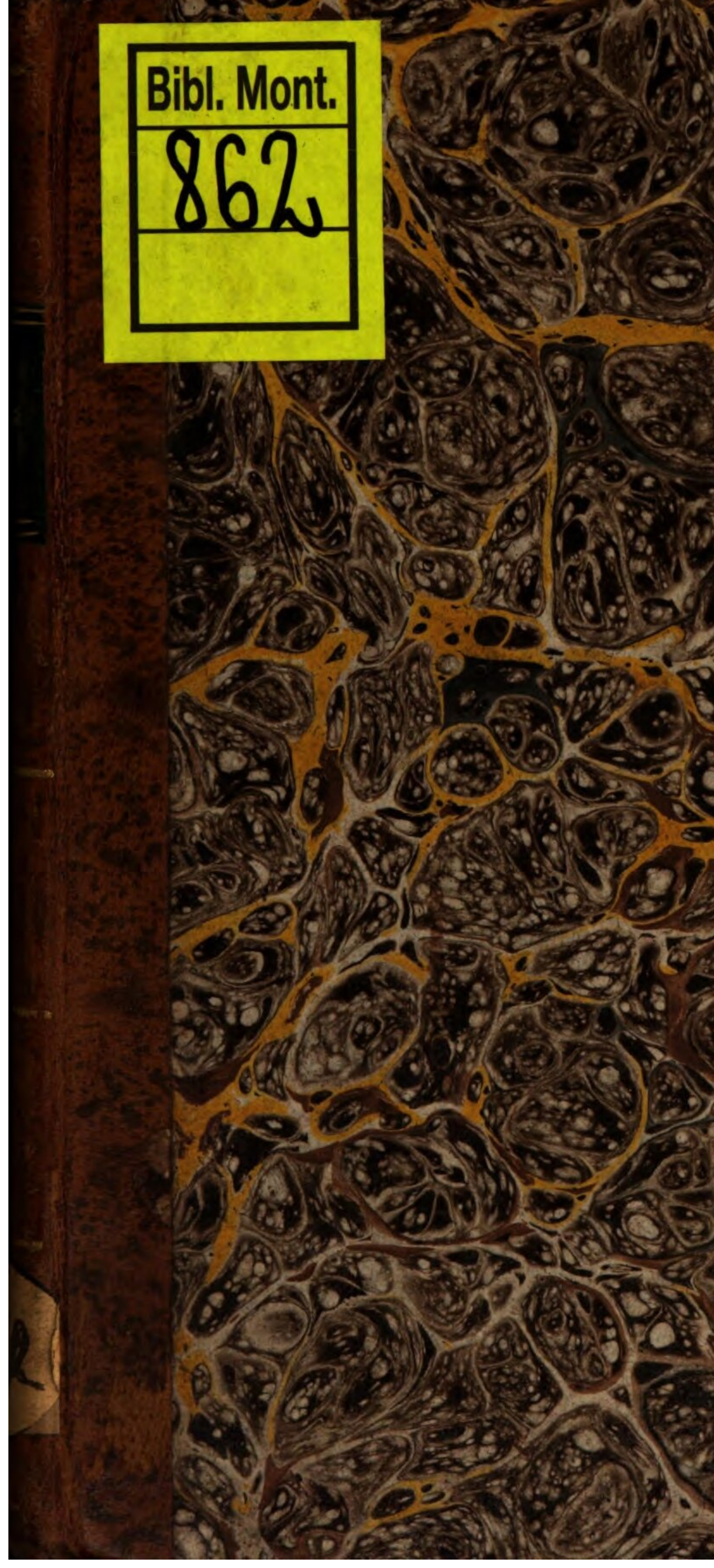


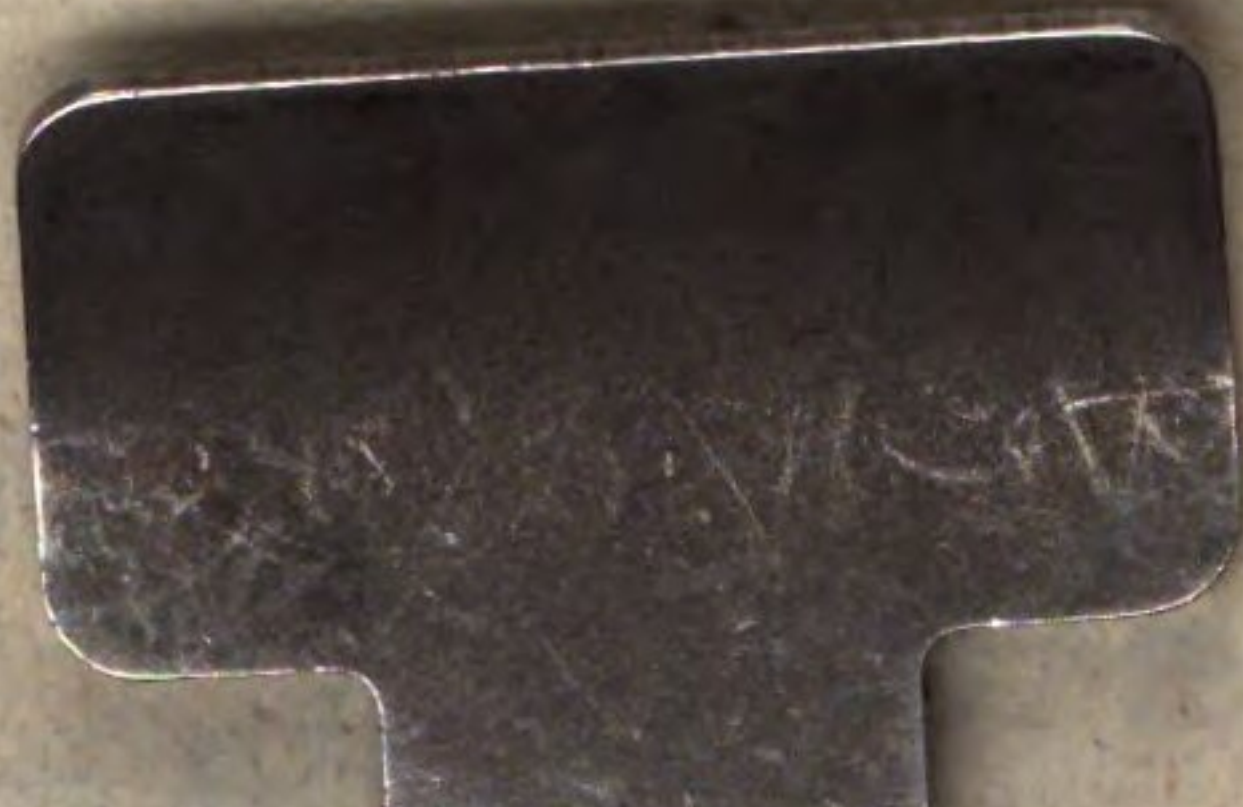
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ELFRIDA,

A

DRAMATIC POEM

WRITTEN ON THE MODEL OF

THE ANCIENT GREEK TRAGEDY.

BY W. MASON, M. A.



PARIS.

Published

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1805.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

EDGAR, King of England.

ATHELWOLD, his Favourite.

ORGAR, Earl of Devon, father to Elfrida.

EDWIN, a Messenger.

ARDULPH, a Courtier.

ELFRIDA, Wife of Athelwold.

PERSONS OF THE CHORUS.

* ALBINA, the principal Virgin.

The Second Virgin.

Third Virgin.

Fourth Virgin.

Fifth Virgin.

Sixth Virgin.

Scene, a Lawn before Athelwold's Castle, in Harewood-Forest.

* The Two last speak in the lyrical Parts, and the Four last sing what is set to Music.

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ELFRIDA,

A

DRAMATIC POEM.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Enter ORGAR and ARDULPH disguised as Pilgrims.

ORGAR.

How nobly does this venerable wood,
Gilt with the glories of the orient sun,
Embosom that fair mansion! The soft air
Salutes us with most cool and temp'rate breath,
And, as we tread, the flower-besprinkled lawn
Sends up a gale of fragrance. Sure, young Earl,
If e'er Content deigns visit mortal clime,
This is her place of dearest residence.

ARDULPH.

Hope not to find it such.

ORGAR.

And why not hope it?

ELFRIDA.

ARDULPH.

Is it not now three months, three tedious months
 Since first Earl ATHELWOLD espous'd your
 daughter,
 And to this secret seat convey'd his bride?
 Convey'd her as by stealth, enjoy'd, and left her.

ORGAR.

True—He besought me for some little space
 The nuptials might be secret, many reasons,
 He said, induc'd to this; I made no pause,
 But, resting on his prudence, to his will
 Gave absolute concurrence.

ARDULPH.

Soon as married,
 Did he not plead I know not what excuse
 Of call to court, of EDGAR'S royal friendship,
 And England's welfare?

ORGAR.

Yes, and I believ'd him.

ARDULPH.

Admit this true; yet, when he quits his prince,
 And here revisits this his cloister'd wife,
 Why should he come in privacy so studied?
 Borrowing disguises till inventive art
 Can scarce supply him with variety?

ORGAR.

And is this so?

ELFRIDA.

ARDULPH.

My life upon its truth.

His visits, as they're stol'n, are also short;
Seldom beyond the circuit of one sun;
Then back to court, while she his absence mourns
Full many a lonely hour.

ORGAR.

I brook not this.

Had Athelwold espous'd some base-born peasant
This usage had been apt; but, when he took
My daughter to his arms, he took a virgin
Through whose rich veins the blood of British kings
Ran in unsullied stream; her lineage, sure,
Might give her place and notice with the noblest
In EDGAR'S court; ELFRIDA'S beauty too
(I speak not from a father's foolish fondness)
Would shine amid the fairest, and reflect
No vulgar glory on that beauty's master.

ARDULPH.

The act bespeaks a madman. Who that own'd
An em'rald, jasper, or rich chrysolite,
Would hide its lustre, or not bid it blaze
Conspicuous on his brow? Haply ATHELWOLD
May have espous'd some other.

ORGAR.

Earl! he durst not.

My former feats in arms must have inform'd him
That ORGAR, while he liv'd, would never prove
A traitor to his honour. If he has,

This aged arm is not so much unstrung
By slack'ning years, but just revenge will brace it;
And by yon awful Heaven—

ARDULPH.

Restrain, my Lord,
This violence of rage. I brought you hither
To sift this matter coolly; do but act
The Pilgrim's part, for which that hat and scrip
And all these marks of vagrant poverty
Are prudently put on, and, rest assur'd,
You soon shall have conviction of his baseness.

CHORUS. (*Within.*)

Hail to thy living light, ambrosial morn!
All hail thy roseate ray!

ARDULPH.

But hark! the sound of sweetest minstrelsy
Breaks on my ear!

ORGAR.

The females, I suppose,
Whom Athelwold has left my child's attendants;
That, when she wails the absence of her Lord,
Their lenient airs, and sprightly-fancied songs,
May steal away her woes.

ARDULPH.

See! they approach:
Retire we to yon grove. I'll there instruct you
In all that best may prosper our design.

[*Exeunt* ORGAR and ARDULPH.]

SCENE II.

ALBINA, CHORUS.

O D E.

CHORUS.

Hail to thy living light, ambrosial morn!
All hail thy roseate ray!

Air.

Hail to thy living light,
Ambrosial morn! all hail thy roseate ray,
That bids gay Nature all her charms display
In varied beauty bright!
That bids each dewy-spangled flowret rise,
And dart around its vermil dies;
Bids silver lustre grace yon sparkling tide,
That winding warbles down the mountain's side!

ALBINA.

Away, ye goblins all!
Wont the bewilder'd traveller to daunt,
Whose vagrant feet have trac'd your secret haunt,
Beside some lonely wall,
Or shatter'd ruin of a moss-grown tower,
Where, at pale midnight's stillest hour,
Thro' each rough chink the solemn orb of night
Pours momentary gleams of trembling light.

CHORUS.

Away, ye elves, away!
Shrink at ambrosial morning's living ray!

That living ray whose pow'r benign
 Unfolds the scene of glory to our eye,
 Where, thron'd in artless majesty,
 The cherub Beauty sits on Nature's rustic shrine.

ALBINA.

But see! our strain has call'd ELFRIDA forth,
 And, as I think, she seems in pensive mood;
 Cease then, my Sisters, nor prolong the lay,
 For there are times, when, to the sorrowing soul,
 Ev'n harmony is harshness.

SCENE III.

ELFRIDA, ALBINA, CHORUS.

ELFRIDA.

Oh! my Virgins!
 With what a leaden, and retarding weight
 Does Expectation load the wing of Time!
 Have I miscounted? did not Athelwold
 At parting fix this morn for his return,
 This dear, long-wish'd-for morn! he did, he did,
 And seal'd it with a kiss. My Lord's delay
 Creates strange doubts and scruples in my breast:
 Courts throng with beauties, and my Athelwold
 Has a soft susceptible heart, as prone
 To yield its love to ev'ry sparkling eye,
 As is the musk-rose to dispense its fragrance
 To each inviting breeze. Perhaps he's false,
 Perhaps ELFRIDA'S wretched.

ALBINA.

Vain surmise!

Tell me, dear mistress, did his ardent eye
Glow with less passion, when he parted hence,
Than at your first blest meeting! no, I mark'd him;
His last soft glance was full of fervent love,
And fealty unalter'd. Do not fear him.

ELFRIDA.

I should not fear him were his present stay
The only cause for fear. 'Tis not, alas!
Why comes my Earl so secret to these arms?
Why but because he dreads the just reproach
Of some deluded fair one? Why am I
Here shrouded up like the pale votarist?
Nor suffer'd to pursue my parting Lord
Whene'er his duty calls him to the palace?

ALBINA.

Here to preserve your beauties from the blast
Of courtly gales is his love's noblest proof.
The blush of modesty, the tender tints
Of innocence there all fly off, and leave
No boast behind but well-ranged, faded features.
Should you be doom'd (which happier fate forbid!)
To that vain scene of pageantry and vice,
Your purer breast, true to its virtuous feeling,
I trust would sigh for innocence and Harewood.

ELFRIDA.

Mistake not, Virgin, I should scorn the palace,
Did not that palace thus detain my love.

If he were here, his presence would convert
 These oaks to stately columns; these gay flowers
 To gallant ladies; and these jutting deer
 To armed knights at joust or tournament;
 If I but mourn'd his absence while he bore
 The hoodwink'd falcon forth, or fleetly chas'd
 The wolf or stag, I should not have one thought
 Remote from Harewood.

ALBINA.

Would'st thou wish, ELFRIDA,
 That ATHELWOLD should waste on toys like these
 His precious hours. He has a king, a country
 That claim his first attention; yet be sure
 'Twill not be long ere his unbending mind
 Shall lose in sweet oblivion ev'ry care
 Amid th' embow'ring shades that veil ELFRIDA.

ELFRIDA.

Oh! be that speech prophetic! may he soon
 Seek these embow'ring shades! And I perchance
 Shall spy him hast'ning to my longing arms,
 From the tall battlements of yonder tower.
 There will I watch; for its exalted head
 Has ample scope of prospect. Mean while, Virgins,
 Bear with the foolish fondness of your friend.
 Who loves must fear, and sure, who loves like me
 Must greatly fear. [Exit ELFRIDA,

ALBINA.

We trust there is no cause.
 See, Sisters, see! how, round yon drooping elm,

That ivy intertwists its verdant folds,
And poisons what supports it. Mark the emblem!
Not less injurious to the shoots of love
Is sickly jealousy. But who come here?

SCENE IV.

ARDULPH, ORGAR, ALBINA, CHORUS.

ALBINA.

Whence is this rudeness, strangers?

ARDULPH.

Pardon, Virgins.

We meant no rudeness, when the warbling strains,
With which you lately made these groves resound,
Hither allur'd our steps; for ah! what ear
So barr'd against the force of harmony,
But must with transport to such sweet assailants
Surrender its attention!

ORGAR.

Never yet

Did we pass by the nightbird's fav'rite spray,
What time she pours her wild, and artless song,
Without attentive pause and silent rapture.
How could we then, with savage disregard,
Hear voices tun'd by nature sweet as her's,
Grac'd with all art's addition!

ALBINA.

Your mean garbs,

And this your courtly phrase but ill accord.

ARDULPH.

'Tis true, we both have worn a richer vestment!
But what avails it now! all have their fate,
And ours has been most wretched.

ALBINA.

May we ask

What cruel cause —

ARDULPH.

No, let our hapless breasts
Still hide the melancholy tale.

ALBINA.

We know

There oft is found an avarice in grief;
And the wan eye of sorrow loves to gaze
Upon its secret hoard of treasur'd woes
In pining solitude. Perhaps thy mind
Takes the same pensive cast: if not, permit
That we in social sympathy may drop
The tender tear.

ORGAR.

Ah! ill would it become you
To let the woes of such a wretch as I am
E'er dim your bright eyes with a pitying tear.

ALBINA.

That eye which will not weep another's sorrows,
Should boast no gentler brightness than the glare
That reddens in the eye-ball of the wolf.
Let us intreat —

ORGAR.

Know, Virgins, I was born
To ample property of lands and flocks
On this side Tweeda's stream; my youth and vigor
Atchiev'd such deeds of chivalry as stamp'd me
Fair in the volume of my Sov'reign's love
Till death eras'd the page; I then, through age,
Unfit for courts, retir'd with this my heir
To my paternal seat, where soon, alas!
By savage inroads of the barbarous Scots
My lands were all laid waste, my vassals murder'd;
While I, oppress'd with years, and he, for lack
Of years to brace his strength, were fain to drag
Our mis'ries thro' the land two friendless wanderers.

ALBINA.

We pity and condole your wretched state,
But we can do no more, which on your parts
Claims just returns of pity; for whose lot
Demands it more than theirs, forbid to taste
The joy of charity, to wipe the tears
Of palsied age, to smoothe its furrow'd brow,
And pay its grey hairs each due reverence?
Yet this our Lord forbids—

ARDULPH.

Who may that tyrant—

ALBINA.

Alas! no tyrant he; the more our wonder
At this harsh mandate. He is of a heart
More apt thro' inborn gentleness to err

In giving mercy's tide too free a course
Than, with a thrifty and illiberal hand,
To stint its channel. This his praise you'll hear
The universal theme of EDGAR's court,
Who loads him with all honour, which he takes
As does the golden censer frankincense
Only to spread a sacred gale of blessings
Through all the realm.

ARDULPH.

Methinks this pleasing portrait
Bears strong resemblance of Earl ATHELWOLD.

ALBINA.

Himself. No Briton but has heard his fame.

ARDULPH.

'Tis wond'rous strange! Can you conceive no cause
For this his conduct?

ALBINA.

None that we may trust.

ORGAR.

Your garbs bespeak you for the fair attendants
Of some illustrious dame, the wife, or sister
Of this dread Earl.

ALBINA.

On this head too, old man,
We are commanded a religious silence.
Wish not to snatch from our young heads that wreath
Of fair Fidelity whose bloom enobles

Ev'n servitude itself. Farewell: depart
 With our best wishes; we do trespass much
 To hold this open converse with a stranger.

ARDULPH.

Stay, Virgins, stay in pity to my father!
 Shew me some friendly shed where his worn limbs
 May rest their load of mis'ry for an hour.
 Have ye no food, however mean and homely,
 Wherewith he might recruit defective nature?
 See how he trembles! how his spirits fail!
 And well, full well I know, his aged feet,
 Ere he could pace a hundred steps, would sink
 Beneath their rev'rend burden.

ALBINA.

Piteous sight!

What shall we do, my Sisters? to admit
 These men beneath the roof would be to scorn
 The Earl's strict interdict; and yet my heart
 Bleeds to behold that white old rev'rend head
 Bow'd with such mis'ry. Bear thy father, youth,
 To yonder bower, there let him rest awhile,
 And there, ere long, some of our sisterhood
 Shall bring him needful sustenance.

ORGAR *and* ARDULPH.

Kind heaven

Reward!—

ALBINA.

Ah! stay not here to thank us,
 But haste to give thy age this meet repose.

That done we do conjure you leave the place
 With cautious secrecy, for were it known
 That thus we trespass'd on our Lord's command,
 The consequence were fatal.

ARDULPH.

Fairest maid,
 Think not we'll basely draw down punishments
 On our preservers. We withdraw. May blessings,
 Shower'd from yon fount of bliss, repay your
 kindness !

[*Exeunt* ORGAR and ARDULPH.

SCENE V.

ALBINA, CHORUS.

ALBINA.

Yes, Sisters, yes, when pale distress
 Implores your aiding hand,
 Let not a partial faithfulness,
 Let not a mortal's vain command
 Urge you to break th' unalterable laws
 Of Heav'n-descended Charity.
 Ah! follow still the meek-ey'd Deity!
 For know each path She draws
 Along the plain of life,
 Meets at the central dome of heartfelt joy;
 Ah! follow still the soft-ey'd Deity!
 She bids you as ye hope for blessings, bless;
 Aid then the gen'ral cause of gen'ral happiness.

*(SYMPHONY.)**Air by the Second Virgin.*

Humanity! thy awful strain
 Shall ever greet our ear,
 Sonorous, sweet, and clear;
 And, as amid the sprightly-swelling strain
 Of dulcet notes, that breathe from flute or lyre,
 The deep bass rolls its manly melody,
 Guiding the tuneful choir,
 So thou, Humanity! shalt lead along
 Th' accordant passions in their moral song,
 And give our mental concert truest harmony.

CHORUS.

Benign humanity
 Shall lead along
 The passions in the moral song,
 And give our mental concert truest harmony.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

ELFRIDA, ALBINA, CHORUS.

ELFRIDA.

THREE tedious hours, ALBINA, now are past
 Since first the crimson mantle of the morn
 Skirted yon gay horizon. My lov'd Lord
 Was wont outstrip the sun's most early speed,
 And make his beams to me unwish'd and needless.
 'Tis not so now. My straining eyes have pierc'd,
 Far as yon length'ning road winds o'er the heath,
 But all in vain. Come then, my Virgins, come;
 Soothe me with harmony: I know full well
 That ye were nurs'd in Cornwall's wizard caves,
 And oft have pac'd the fairy-peopled vales
 Of Devon, where posterity still keeps
 Some vein of that old minstrelsy and wild
 Which once had magic in it. Try its power,
 Try if its sprightly spell will speed the flight
 Of these dull hours, and make them skim their round
 Fleet as the swallow circles.

[ELFRIDA *reclines on a bank.*

ODE.

Air by the Second Virgin.

The turtle tells her plaintive tale,
 Sequester'd in some shadowy vale;

The lark in radiant ether floats,
And swells his wild ecstatic notes ;
Meanwhile on yonder hawthorn spray
The linnet wakes her temp'rate lay ;
She haunts no solitary shade,
She flutters o'er no sunshine mead,
No love-lorn griefs depress her song,
No raptures lift it loudly high ;
But soft she trills amid th' aerial throng
Smooth simple strains of sob'rest harmony.

Third Virgin speaks.

Sweet Bird, like thine our lay shall flow,
Nor gaily brisk nor sadly slow ;
For to thy note sedate and clear,
Content still lends a list'ning ear ;
Reclin'd this mossy bank along,
Oft has he heard thy careless song ;
Why hears not now ! what fairer grove
From Harewood lures her devious love ?
What fairer grove than Harewood knows
More woodland walks, more flagrant gales,
More shadowy bowers inviting soft repose,
More streams slow - wand'ring thro' her winding
vales ?

ALBINA. (After a short symphony)

Perhaps to some lone cave the rover flies,
Where lull'd in pious peace the hermit lies ;
For from the hall's tumultuous state,
Where banners wave with blazon'd gold,

There will the meek-ey'd Matron oft retreat,
And with the solemn sage high converse hold.

There, Goddess, on the shaggy mound,
Where tumbling torrents roar around;
Where pendant mountains o'er your head
Stretch their reverential shade,
You listen while the holy seer
Slowly chaunts his vespers clear;
Or, of his sparing mess partake,
The sav'ry pulse, the wheaten cake,
The bev'rage cool of limpid rill,
Then, rising light, your host you bless,
And o'er his saintly temples bland distill
Seraphic day-dreams of Heav'n's happiness.

Air by the Second Virgin.

Where'er thou art enchanting Power,
Thou soon wilt smile on Harewood's bower,
Soon will thy fairy feet be seen,
Printing this dew-impearled green;
Soon shall we mark thy gestures meek,
Thy glitt'ring eye and dimpled cheek:
Among the welcome guests that move
Attendant on the state of love;
There, where the sov'reign leads along
Of sports and smiles a jocund train,
Then last, but loveliest of the lovely throng,
Thou com'st to soften, yet secure his reign.

CHORUS.

And, hark! compleating our prophetic strain,
The fleet hoof rattles o'er the flinty plain

Now nearer, and now nearer sounds:
Avaunt, ye vain delusive fears!
Hark! Echo tells, thro' Harewood's ample bounds,
That Love, Content, and ATHELWOLD appears!

SCENE II.

ATHELWOLD, ELFRIDA, ALBINA,
CHORUS.

ATHELWOLD.

Look ever thus with that bright glance of joy!
Thus always meet my transports! Let these arms
Thus ever fold me, and this cheek, that blooms
With all health's op'ning roses, press my lips,
Warm as at this blest moment!

ELFRIDA.

ATHELWOLD!

I had prepar'd me many a stern rebuke:
Had arm'd my brow with frowns, and taught my eye
Th' averted glance of coldness, which might best
Greet such a loit'ring lover, but I find
'Twas a vain task, for this my truant heart
Forgets each lesson that resentment taught,
And in thy sight knows only to be happy.

ATHELWOLD.

My best ELFRIDA—Heav'ns! it cannot be!
The giddy height of joy to which I'm lifted,
Is as a hanging rock at whose low foot
The black and beating surge of infamy
Rolls, ready to receive, and sink my soul! [*Aside.*]

ELFRIDA.

So soon to fall into this musing mood—
 I thought, my Lord, you promis'd you would leave
 These cares at court. You plac'd me here at
 Harewood

To bless your arms (for so your fondness term'd it)
 When, free'd from public toils, your vacant breast
 Might all be fill'd with rapture, and ELFRIDA.
 Why then that downcast eye! The palace, sure,
 And this still grove have lost their difference;
 I'll follow you to court.

ATHELWOLD.

High Heav'n forbid!

ELFRIDA.

Nay, my best Lord, I meant it but in sport,
 For, should you bid me quit these blooming groves
 For some drear savage desert, I would call
 Its wildness paradise, if ATHELWOLD
 With frequent visitation grac'd the scene.
 But yet I fear my father.

ATHELWOLD.

Hah, why him!

ELFRIDA.

You know his haughty temper, and his boast
 Of royal ancestry. He will dislike
 My long confinement here, nor think it suits
 The rank of her whose high-born veins are fill'd
 With the rich stream of his nobility.

ATHELWOLD.

He need not know it; or, if chance he should,
It matters not, if so this forest life
Seem of your own election, and free choice.
And that it will so seem I trust that love
Which yet has met my will with pleas'd compliance.

ELFRIDA.

And ever shall. Yet blame me not, my Lord,
If prying womanhood should prompt a wish
To learn the cause of your strange fear which wakes
Whene'er I talk of court.

ATHELWOLD.

Go to the surface
Of yon unruffled lake, and, bending o'er it,
There read my answer.

ELFRIDA.

These are riddles, Sir—

ATHELWOLD.

No : for its glassy and reflecting surface
Will smile with charms too tempting for a palace.

ELFRIDA.

Doth ATHELWOLD distrust ELFRIDA's faith!

ATHELWOLD.

No, but he much distrusts ELFRIDA's beauty.

ELFRIDA.

Away! you trifle.

ATHELWOLD.

Never more in earnest.
I would not, for the throne which EDGAR sits on,
That EDGAR should behold it.

ELFRIDA.

What, my Lord,
Think you the form that caught your single heart
Will make all hearts its captives! vain surmise!
Yet, grant it could; that form is yours alone,
Nor EDGAR's self would dare to seize it from you:
EDGAR's a king, and not a tyrant.

ATHELWOLD.

True,
EDGAR's a king, a just one; his firm feet
Walk ever in the foreright round of honour,
Nor do I know what lure can draw his steps
Devious from that straight path, save only one;
That tempting lure is beauty. Ah, ELFRIDA!
Throw but that dazzling bait within his view,
The untam'd wolf does not, with fiercer rage,
Burst the slight bondage of the silken net,
Than he the ties of law—

ALBINA.

Behold, my Lord,
A messenger arrives! his speed and aspect
Speak some important errand.

SCENE III.

EDWIN, ATHELWOLD, ELFRIDA,
ALBINA, CHORUS.

ATHELWOLD.

How now, EDWIN!

EDWIN.

The King, my Lord, is on his way to Harewood.

ATHELWOLD.

The King!

EDWIN.

His purpose is to pass thro' Mercia;
And, in a hasty message, some two hours
After you left the palace, this his pleasure
Was sent you by Lord Seofrid withal
Commanding your attendance: you being absent,
He straitway turn'd his course thro' this fair forest,
Meaning to chase the stag. His train is small,
As was his purpose sudden.

ELFRIDA.

Good, my Lord,

Why thus perplex'd!

ALBINA.

Heavens! what a deep despair
Sits on his brow!

ELFRIDA.

The notice sure is short;
But that's a trifle; a small train requires
A smaller preparation; let him come.

ATHELWOLD.

Yes, let him come, so thou wilt say, ELFRIDA,
 When thou hast heard my tale. Yes, let him come
 So wilt thou say, and let thy husband perish.
 Yet shall these arms once more embrace thee closely,
 Ere yet thou fly them as the pois'nous adder.
 'Tis o'er—; in that embrace ELFRIDA's love
 Was buried, and, in that embrace, the peace
 Of wretched ATHELWOLD!

ELFRIDA.

What may this mean?

ATHELWOLD.

Oh! EDWIN, EDWIN, when surviving malice
 Shall prey upon the fame of thy dead master,
 Wilt thou not someway strive to check the fiend's
 Insatiate fury? wilt thou see my name
 Defil'd, and blacken'd with detraction's venom,
 And take it patiently?

ELFRIDA.

What means my best—

ATHELWOLD.

Peace! not a word of best, or lov'd, or dear,
 Such tender terms are not for thee to use,
 Or me to triumph in. Virgins, retire,
 We would awhile be private. Nay, return,
 Concealment now is vain, and ye and EDWIN
 I know are bound to me. For you, ALBINA,
 I sav'd your father when his blood was forfeit.

ALBINA.

Not I alone, but all this train are bound
Firm to that mildest master, whose commands
Are of such liberal sort as Freedom's self
Would smilingly perform.

ATHELWOLD.

It may be so:

But where's the tie, ELFRIDA, that may bind
Thy duty firm?

ELFRIDA.

The strongest, sure, my Lord,
The golden nuptial tie. Try but its strength.

ATHELWOLD.

I must perforce this instant. Know, ELFRIDA,
Once, on a festive day, the King and nobles
Crown'd high the sparkling bowl, and much of love,
Of beauty much the sprightly converse ran.
When ARDULPH spoke of ORGAR's peerless
daughter,
And in such sort as might inflame a breast
More cool than EDGAR's. Early on the morrow
The King commission'd me to view thy charms,
And if I found them fair as the Earl boasted,
Gave me his royal mandate, on the proof,
To hail thee Queen of England.

ELFRIDA.

'Stead of which

You came and hail'd me wife of ATHELWOLD.
Was this the fearful tale, this the dire deed
Would make me fly thee like the pois'nous adder!

See! I again embrace thee; dearest proof
That thy ELFRIDA's love can never die,
Or, if it could, that this embrace revives it.

ATHELWOLD.

Dost thou then pardon me! come, injur'd Sov'reign,
Plunge deep thy sword of justice in this breast,
And I will die contented.

ELFRIDA.

Heav'n forbid!

What can be done?

ALBINA.

Indeed, ye constant pair,
'Tis fit ye strive to fly the coming danger,
For safety now sits wavering on your loves,
Like the light down upon the thistle's beard
Which every breeze may part. Say, noble Earl,
What feint was us'd to lull the King's impatience?

ATHELWOLD.

Soon as these shades had veil'd my beauteous bride,
I hasted back to EDGAR, laugh'd at ARDULPH,
And talk'd of ELFRID' as of vulgar beauties.
The sprightly King believ'd me and forgot her.

ALBINA.

But this so great alliance soon would blaze
The theme of popular converse!

ATHELWOLD.

True it would,
And, for that reason, when I last was here
The King was taught I went to wed ELFRIDA.

ELFRIDA.

How so, my Lord?

ATHELWOLD.

Thy father, my ELFRIDA,
Has rich possessions; these, and these alone,
I made my theme of love; and told the King,
That tho' thy charms (pardon the impious falsehood)
Would fail to grace his throne, yet would thy dow'ry
Well suit his minister. I therefore meant
To ask thee of thy father; but when married
To hide thy homeliness in Harewood castle.
EDGAR with smiles consented, and I think
Harbours no thought of my disloyalty.

ELFRIDA.

If so, what danger now?

ATHELWOLD.

Ask'st thou what danger?
Heav'ns! will that glance not instantly proclaim
My tenfold perfidy!

ELFRIDA.

He shall not see me.
I'll hide me, instant, in some secret chamber,
And robe some homely female in my vestments.

ATHELWOLD.

Thy love like balm runs trickling o'er the wounds
Of my torn bosom; yet 'tis vain, 'tis vain,
Thou must thyself appear, for ARDULPH ever
Attends the King, and would detect the fraud.

If so, I'll mar my softness of complexion,
With the brown juice of many a dusky berry,
That this wild wood will yield me, so to hide
The little gleams of grace which Nature lent me.
Fear not my caution.

ATHELWOLD.

Gentlest! best of creatures!
Go; do then as thy tender care directs:
And yet how vain! what art from those bright eyes
Can steal their light'ning, rob those waving locks
Of all their nameless graces! Say it could,
Yet would that modest but majestic mien
That speaks thy dignity of soul remain
To seize the heart of EDGAR. Rest, ELFRIDA,
Rest as thou art, in all that blaze of beauty;
I must submit to my just lot, and lose thee.

EDWIN.

Ere this, my Lord, I think the King has reach'd
The full midway, 'twere fit you stood prepar'd
To give him meeting.

ATHELWOLD.

Give him meeting, EDWIN!
Alas! I have no mask to veil my baseness,
When deep contrition shadows all my soul,
I cannot dress my features in light smiles,
And look the thing I am not: no, these eyes
Are not as yet true vassals to my purpose,
As yet, indeed, I am but half a villain.

ELFRIDA.

You weigh this matter in too nice a balance;
Your crime, my Lord, is but the crime of love;
Thousands like you have fail'd.

ATHELWOLD.

I know, ELFRIDA,
Could love absolve the crime, my soul were pure
As maiden innocence. Yes I do love thee,
And thou art fair beyond—but that's my bane—
Thy ev'ry charm adds weight to my offence,
And heaps fresh wrongs upon the best of masters.
Yes, ELFRID', EDGAR was the best of masters,
Oh! hide me from the thought in that dear bosom—
Heav'ns! I must die or keep her!

ELFRIDA.

Live or die
I'm thine alike; death cannot aught abate,
Or life augment my love.

ATHELWOLD.

O my heart's idol!
Thy ev'ry word and look declares thee faithful.
Secure of all thy love, and all thy prudence,
Returning confidence has arm'd my soul
For this dread meeting; resting on thy truth
I go. [Exeunt ATHELWOLD and EDWIN.]

SCENE IV.

ELFRIDA, ALBINA, CHORUS.

ELFRIDA.

Go, and thy guardian saint preserve thee!
 Shower blessings vast as would my lavish love,
 Had I his power to bless thee!

ALBINA.

Yes, my Sisters,
 The silent awe that reigns thro' all your train
 Befit you well; let admiration first
 Pay her mute tribute. She can best express
 By those her kindling cheeks and lifted eyes
 Where the tear twinkles, that transcendant praise
 ELFRIDA's virtue claims.

ELFRIDA.

My virtue, Virgin,
 Is only love, or say that it be virtue,
 It owes its force to love, to chastest love,
 Than which what passion more impels the mind,
 To fair and gen'rous action! But the hours
 Are precious now, I'll to the neighb'ring grove:
 There grows an azure flow'r, I oft have mark'd it,
 Which stains the pressing finger with a juice
 Of dusky, yellow tinct. Its name I know not;
 I'll fetch it strait and try its friendly power.

[Exit ELFRIDA. *Curtain drops.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

A C T I I I.

S C E N E I.

ALBINA, CHORUS.

ODE. (*Symphony.*)*Second Virgin speaks.*

W HENCE does this sudden lustre rise
 That gilds the grove? not like the noontide beam
 Which sparkling dances on the trembling stream,
 Nor the blue light'ning's flash swift-shooting thro'
 the skies;

But such a sober steady light
 As o'er the cloudless azure steals
 When Cynthia riding on the brow of night
 Stops in their mid career her silver wheels.

A L B I N A.

Whence can it rise, but from the sober power
 Of Constancy? She, Heav'n-born Queen,
 Descends, and in her Harewood's hallow'd bower
 Fixes her steadfast reign;
 Steadfast as when her high command
 Gives to the starry band
 Their radiant stations in Heav'n's ample plain;
 Steadfast as when around this nether sphere
 She winds the purple year.

D U E T T O.

Tells what time the snow-drop cold
 Its maiden whiteness may unfold;

When the golden harvest bend;
 When the ruddy fruit descend;
 Then bids pale Winter rise to pour
 The pearly hail's translucent shower
 To cast his silver mantle o'er the woods,
 And bind, in crystal chains, the slumb'ring floods.

ALBINA.

The soul that she inspires has pow'r to climb
 To all the heights sublime
 Of Virtue's tow'ring hill;
 That hill at whose low foot weak-warbling strays
 The scanty stream of human praise,
 A shallow trickling rill.
 While, on the summits, hov'ring angels shed
 From their blest pinions the nectareous dews
 Of rich immortal fame; from these the muse
 Oft steals some precious drops, and skilful blends
 With those the lower fountain sends:
 Then show'rs it all on some high favour'd head.
 But thou, ELFRIDA, claim'st the genuine dew:
 Thy worth demands it all;
 Pure and unmixt on thee the holy drops shall fall.

FULL CHORUS.

ELFRIDA's virtues claim
 The genuine dews of Fame:
 Her worth demands them all;
 Pure and unmixt on her the holy drops shall fall.

[ELFRIDA *returns with flowers,*
followed by ORGAR.

SCENE II.

ELFRIDA, ORGAR, ARDULPH, ALBINA,
CHORUS.

ELFRIDA.

'Tis strange, my Virgins, this sweet child of summer,
Silken and soft, whose breath perfumes the air,
Whose gay vest paints the morn, should in its bosom
Aid such pollution! yet 'tis often thus;
All are not what they seem.

ORGAR.

Yet hear me, Lady!

ELFRIDA.

Begone! unmanner'd stranger, nor pursue me!
Know ye these pilgrims, Virgins?

ALBINA.

Some hours past,
We heard their tale, which mov'd our pity much;
Yet they perchance were spies, and may have
learnt—

ARDULPH.

We have, yet not for that are ye betray'd.

ORGAR.

No, Lady, no; our hearts are bound unto you,
I feel the tend'rest int'rests in your welfare,
Tender as fathers feel.

ELFRIDA.

ELFRIDA.

As fathers feel!
That well known voice, and ah! that look—

ORGAR. (*Discovering himself.*)

ELFRIDA!

ELFRIDA.

Yes, it is he! it is my father, Virgins!
Support me or I faint! Oh wherefore, Sir!

ORGAR.

Take courage, daughter, my paternal fondness
Has brought me here disguis'd.

ELFRIDA.

Then all is lost—

ARDULPH.

No, fair ELFRIDA, all is gain'd, or shall be,
Which thy high beauty merits.

ORGAR.

That I know not,
Nor wish for, Earl, till first my injur'd honor
Has call'd down vengeance on the traitor's head.

ARDULPH.

Peace, Sir, let me persuade—

ELFRIDA.

Ah! said you, vengeance?
It must be so. I know it. He must fall.
Yet shall my trembling heart in his defence

Invoke the pitying saints. Celestial guardians
Of nuptial constancy, Oh! bend from Heaven
Your star-crown'd heads, and hear a wretched
woman,

That begs you save from a dread father's rage
Her Lord, her husband!

ORGAR.

Husband! sooner call
Th' impeached thief true master of the booty
He stole, or murder'd for. Disdain the villain,
And aid me to revenge thee.

ALBINA.

Know, great Earl,
Vengeance in storms and thunders sits enshrin'd,
Vested in robes of light'ning, and there sleeps
Unwak'd but by the incens'd Almighty's call.
Oh! let not man presume to take unbid
That dread vicegerency.

ORGAR.

Peace, Virgins, peace :
These idle laws have little weight with me
When fir'd by such an insult. Hear me, daughter,
You meant to search for flow'rs to blot your beauty ;
Yes, you shall search for flow'rs, yet shall they be
The lov'liest of the spring, whose added charms
Twin'd in your hair, or blushing in your bosom,
May to the power of ev'ry native grace
Give double life and lustre. Haste thee then,
Array thyself in thy most gorgeous garb,

D

Let jewels blaze around thee; more than all,
Put on the ornament of winning smiles,
And kind inviting glances.

ELFRIDA.

Never, never;
When this true heart renounces Athelwold,
May equitable Heav'n —

ORGAR.

Away with vows!
And listen my persuasions, nor compel me
To use a father's stern prerogative.
Follow me on thy duty.

ELFRIDA.

Cruel father!
That duty shall obey thee. I will follow;
Yet dread as is that frown, dreadful as death,
It shall not shake the tenor of my faith;
Living or dead, I still am ATHELWOLD's.

[*Exeunt* ORGAR and ELFRIDA.

SCENE III.

ARDULPH, ALBINA, CHORUS.

ALBINA.

Ah, cruel stranger! wherefore cam'st thou hither?
To our destruction —

ARDULPH.

To release your mistress
From fraud, from thraldom; to exalt her beauties
To EDGAR's throne; such was my honest errand.

ALBINA.

Say rather from some envious wish malign,
To ruin ATHELWOLD, our gen'rous master.
For, much I fear, in that same peasant garb
Earl ARDULPH hides his state.

ARDULPH.

He does, and wisely;
So shall ye own, when honour, truth, and justice,
With your own int'rest join'd, has weigh'd his
purpose.

Know, Virgins, Edgar comes not now to Harewood
A casual guest, though yet the monarch knows not
Wherefore he comes.

ALBINA.

Ah! might he never know it!
Or, if he must, may his regardless heart,
As soon as known, forget it!

ARDULPH.

Hope not that.

ALBINA.

What then have we to hope?

ARDULPH.

In England's court
From ELFRID's exaltation every blessing
That springs from royal favour.

ALBINA.

Freely, Earl,
To thee those courtly blessings we consign:

Be ours content and Harewood. Vain, vain wish!
I hear the winding horn, the King arrives.

ARDULPH.

He does, and now let fortune guide the rest.
I will not join him till his own true eye
Has read his minion's fate in ELFRID's features.
[*Exit* ARDULPH.

ALBINA.

Shall we too quit the grove? no, Sisters, rather
Attend we here, with suppliant eyes and voices,
To plead, as duty prompts, our master's pardon.

SCENE IV.

EDGAR, ATHELWOLD, ALBINA,
CHORUS.

EDGAR.

No, ATHELWOLD, not from a partial blindness,
Or for the mode, and guise of courtesy,
Are we thus large in praise; in our true judgment
This castle is not more kind Nature's debtor
For its delicious seat, than 'tis to thee
For that nice symmetry and modest skill
That fram'd its structure; from its firmset base
Ev'n to yon turret's trim and slender spires,
All is of choicest masonry. Each part
Doth boast a separate grace, yet each combines
To form one graceful whole. But ah! my Earl,
[*Seeing* ALBINA *and the Chorus.*
What living charms are here! thy castle's beauty

Must not detain me from this lovelier prospect.
Your pardon, fair ones, that my wayward eye
Paid not at first, where first was surely due,
Fit homage to your charms.

ATHELWOLD. *[Aside.*

Ye Heavens! they weep.
What may this mean! some dread and unseen chance
Has counterwork'd my safety.

EDGAR.

Whence this silence?
Why are your lovely heads thus bow'd with sadness?
Beshrew my heart! my Lords, but this is strange.
I know thee, Earl, and know thy gentleness,
More prone t'obey than lord it o'er the sex,
Else should I guess this sorrow had its rise
From some discourteous treatment.

ALBINA.

No, dread sov'reign,
He is the noblest, gentlest, best of masters,
And may your love reward—

[Enter ORGAR.

SCENE V.

ORGAR, EDGAR, ATHELWOLD, ALBINA,
CHORUS.

ATHELWOLD.

Death to my hopes!

ORGAR.

Yes, villain, start! but let this vengeful arm
Arrest thy baseness; would to Heav'n its strength

Thus grasping thee, could open thy false breast,
And bare thy heart to the sham'd eye of day.

EDGAR.

Hot man, who art thou?

ORGAR.

ORGAR, Earl of Devon!

Pardon me, Prince, that thus my honest rage
O'erleaps obedient duty. I am wrong'd,
Yet that's not much. 'Tis thine, much injur'd Prince,
Thy wrongs that I proclaim. Here, on my honour,
I call Earl ATHELWOLD a faithless traitor.

EDGAR.

Ha! what is this! renounce the word, old Earl,
Thy length of years has forc'd thee sure to pass
The verge of dotage : ATHELWOLD, what!

ATHELWOLD

A faithless traitor! perish the suspicion.
Never before did word, or thought, or look,
Give doubt of his distinguish'd loyalty.
Dotage alone could frame the accusation.

ORGAR.

I do not dote; thank Heav'n, my faculties
Are yet my own, unblemish'd, and unhurt:
Would so my daughter were!

EDGAR.

What is his drift?

ATHELWOLD.

Better, my royal Lord, you mark'd him not;
The wayward Earl is—

ORGAR.

What! audacious villain,
I will be heard.

EDGAR.

Go to, thou choleric Lord.

ORGAR.

When thou hast heard me, King, then call me
choleric.

EDGAR.

Speak then, and briefly.

ORGAR.

Once, my sacred Liege,
I had a daughter, duteous as e'er crown'd
A father's wish, and lovely as could warm
A youth to am'rous transports. This, my Lord,
You learnt long since from noble Ardulph's praises,
And, fir'd with his description, sent this Earl,
This faithful Earl, t'invite her to your throne.

EDGAR.

No, ORGAR, not to invite her to our throne;
Simply to note her beauty was his errand.

ORGAR.

Yes, he did note it, stamp'd it for his own:
But why this parley? enter, Sir, these gates,
And let ELFRIDA's features be the book
Where you may read the story of his falsehood,
Ev'n at one glance.

EDGAR.

Lead on then, noble Earl,
 We'll follow to the trial. I will humour
 The Earl's hot temper; he has heard, my friend,
 We meant t'exalt his daughter, and for that
 His partial fondness, link'd with his ambition,
 Levels this rage on thee.

[*Exeunt* EDGAR and ORGAR, &c.

SCENE VI.

ALBINA, ATHELWOLD, CHORUS.

ALBINA.

My Lord, the King is enter'd, stand not thus
 In mute distress.

ATHELWOLD.

Away, away, ALBINA,
 How should a man that thinks such thoughts as mine
 Have power of word, or motion? Speak to me;
 Inform me all. What said she when I left her?
 How came her father hither? how did she
 Greet his arrival? say, was she compell'd,
 Or did her free and voluntary voice
 Tell all the story? did she marshal him
 To this his deed of vengeance?

ALBINA.

Dearest master,
 ELFRIDA told him not; his own deceit
 Was his informer. Here the Earl arriv'd

Early at morn, in mean and pilgrim weeds,
And with him the Lord ARDULPH.

ATHELWOLD.

ARDULPH, say'st thou?

ALBINA.

Yes, but alike disguis'd. And with a tale
Fraught with such sad and moving circumstance,
Their woes so well dissembled, that our softness
Suffer'd them t' enter yon close bower for rest,
Which they adapting to their prying purpose,
Thence learn'd the secret. This our disobedience
We own—

ATHELWOLD.

Was my perdition. Yet 'tis well;
I blame you not. It was Heav'n's justice, Virgin!
This brought them hither, this annull'd your faith;
I do not think you purpos'd my destruction;
But yet you have destroy'd me. Ah, Elfrida,
And art thou faithful? this my jealous eye
Thought it had mark'd some speck of change upon
thee;

Thought it had found what might have made thy
loss

Somewhat within endurance. 'Tis not so,
And this thy purity but serves t'augment
The sum of my distractions. Meet me, EDGAR,
With thy rais'd sword: be merciful and sudden.

[*Exit ATHELWOLD into the Castle hastily.*

SCENE VII.

ALBINA, CHORUS.

[SYMPHONY.]

CHORUS.

Horror! Horror!

The pen of fate, dipp'd in its deepest gall,
 Perhaps on that ill-omen'd wall
 Now writes th' event of this tremendous day.

ALBINA.

Oh! that our weaker sight
 Could read the mystic characters, and spy
 What, to the unpurg'd mortal eye,
 Is hid in endless night.

Air by the Second Virgin.

Suspence! thou frozen guest, begone!
 The wretch, whose rugged bed
 Is lin'd with thorns, more softly rests his head
 Than he that sinks amid the cygnet's down,
 If thou, tormenting fiend, be nigh
 To prompt his starting tear, his ceaseless sigh,
 His wish, his pray'r, his vow, for ling'ring certainty.

CHORUS *repeated.*

Horror! Horror!

The pen of fate, dipp'd in its deepest gall,
 Perhaps on that ill - omen'd wall,
 Now writes th'event of this tremendous day.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

A C T I V.

S C E N E I.

ATHELWOLD, EDWIN, ALBINA,
CHORUS.

ATHELWOLD.

BANISH me! no, I'll die: for why should life
Remain a lonely lodger in that breast
Which honour leaves deserted! Idle breath,
Thou canst not fill such vacancy. Be gone!
This sword shall free—

ALBINA.

Oh! shame to Fortitude!
Shame to that manly passion, which inspires
It's vigorous warmth, when the bleak blasts of Fate
Would chill the soul. Oh! call thy ready virtue
Quick to thy aid, for she is ever near thee,
And ever prompt to spread her sev'nfold shield
O'er noble breasts.

ATHELWOLD.

And but o'er noble breasts;
Not o'er the breast which livid infamy
Indelibly has spotted. Oh! shame, shame!
Sword, rid me of the thought.

ALBINA.

Forbear, forbear;
Think what a sea of deep perdition whelms

The wretch's trembling soul who launches forth,
 Unlicens'd, to eternity. Think, think;
 And let the thought restrain thy impious hand.
 The race of man is one vast marshal'd army,
 Summon'd to pass the spacious realms of time,
 Their leader the Almighty. In that march
 Ah! who may quit his post! when high in air
 The chos'n archangel rides, whose right hand wields
 Th' imperial standard of Heav'n's providence,
 Which, dreadly sweeping thro' the vaulted sky,
 O'ershadows all creation.

ATHELWOLD.

I was once—

Yes I was once (I have his royal word for't)
 A man of such try'd faith, such steady honour,
 As mock'd all doubt and scruple—What a change!
 Now must this unstain'd virgin character
 Sate the vile lust of Slander; and my wife,
 My chaste ELFRIDA! Oh! distraction! no—
 I'll fly to save her.

EDWIN.

Stay, my dearest master;
 You rush on instant death.

ATHELWOLD.

I mean it, EDWIN,
 And would'st thou hinder me?

EDWIN.

Yes, Sir, I hold
 'Tis duty to my King, and love to you,
 Thus to oppose your entrance.

ATHELWOLD.

What! thou traitor!—

Thy pardon, EDWIN, I forgot myself;
Forgot, that I stood here a banish'd man;
And that this gate was shut against its Master.
And yet this gate leads to my dear ELFRIDA;
Can it be barr'd to me? O earth, cold earth!

[*Throwing himself on the ground.*

Upon whose breast I cast this load of misery,
Bear it awhile; and you, ye aged oaks,
Ye venerable fathers of this wood,
Who oft have shelter'd with your arching boughs
My honour'd ancestors; ah! shade awhile
The last, the wretched remnant of their race.
I will not long pollute you; for I mean
To pay beneath your consecrated gloom
A sacrifice to honour, and the ghosts
Of those progenitors who sternly frown
On me their base descendant.

EDWIN.

See, ye Virgins,
How horror shades his brow! how fix'd his eye!
Heav'ns! what despair—

ALBINA.

EDWIN, 'tis ever thus
With noble minds, if chance they slide to folly;
Remorse stings deeper, and relentless conscience
Pours more of gall into the bitter cup
Of their severe repentance.

E

ATHELWOLD. (*Starting up*)

'Tis resolv'd—
I'll enter, and demand a second audience.
And yet how vain! ere I can reach his ear,
Ardulph's new friends will stop me, and with all
The cruel punctuality of office,
So prompt to act 'gainst fallen favourites,
Dismiss me with reproof.

ELFRIDA. (*Within*)

Yes, I will once
More clasp him in my arms.

ATHELWOLD.

Surely, I heard her.
She comes, she comes!

SCENE II.

ELFRIDA, EDGAR, ATHELWOLD,
ORGAR, ARDULPH, EDWIN, ALBINA,
CHORUS.

ELFRIDA.

I will not be withheld.
I'll follow him to exile. Ha! my husband!
So quickly found! they thought to tear me from
thee,
But we will part no more.

EDGAR.

Take heed, ELFRIDA,
This ill-tim'd fondness may recall the fate

I just now freed him from ; who loves like me
Can ill brook this. Or quit him, or he dies.

ATHELWOLD.

Yes, let me die! death is my dearest wish.
Quit me, ELFRIDA! leave me to my fate.
'Tis just, 'tis just. Thus to my sov'reign's sword
Freely I bare my breast. Strike, injur'd Prince;
But do not banish me.

ELFRIDA.

What, ATHELWOLD!
Is then the life, on whose dear preservation
ELFRIDA's peace depends, not worth the saving?
Die then. But ere he strikes the murd'rous stroke,
Let me inform the King, his act destroys
No single life.

EDGAR. (*To ARDULPH*)

By Heav'n! she loves the traitor
Beyond all hope of change—

ELFRIDA.

No, ATHELWOLD,
Thou shalt not die. That pause in royal EDGAR
Bespeaks forgiveness. He will soon relent;
And mercy, flowing from his gracious tongue,
Seal thy full pardon. Let us kneel, my Lord;
And while these streaming eyes and lifted hands
Employ their powers of silent supplication,
Do thou recount; ah! no: thy modest tongue
Could never tell ev'n half the gallant story.
Be silent then; while EDGAR's mem'ry weighs

All thy past deeds of loyalty and faith
'Gainst this so light a fault.

EDGAR.

So light a fault!
Had he dislodg'd my richest coffer'd treasures,
Or aim'd with daring and rebellious hand
To snatch these royal honours from my brow,
I sooner could have pardon'd—

ATHELWOLD.

Cease, ELFRIDA,
My doom is just—Yes, royal Sir, I go
To banishment. I do deserve to breathe:
Deserve to bear this load of life upon me
For many years; to lengthen out my age,
List'ning the hourly knell of curs'd remembrance,
Whose leaden stroke shall tell to my sad soul
That I was faithful once.

ALBINA.

Hear, royal EDGAR,
Oh! hear the penitent! For know, dread King,
There is a rose-lip'd Seraph sits on high,
Who ever bends his holy ear to earth
To mark the voice of Penitence, to catch
Each solemn sigh, to tune them to his harp,
And echo them in harmonies divine
Up to the throne of Grace.

ELFRIDA.

Yes, Heaven is won
By penitence, and shall Heaven's substitute,
Shall EDGAR scorn its power!

EDGAR.

Cease, beauteous pleader.

Ah! far too beauteous! would'st thou gain thy suit?
Why glows that vermil lip, why rolls that eye
Bright as the ray of morn! Thy charms condemn
him.

Each proves a powerful advocate against him.
Traitor! was this the face which thy false tongue
Profan'd as vulgar! this such common beauty
As the fair eye of day beheld each hour
In ev'ry clime he lighted! base dissembler!
This instant quit our realm.

ELFRIDA.

Oh! stay thee, EDGAR,

And once more hear me. At thy feet I fall,
As earnest and distress'd a suppliant
As e'er embrac'd the knees of majesty.
Ah! spare thy ATHELWOLD! let not one fault,
Cancel his thousand, thousand acts of faith.
Alas! I fall to vainest repetition.
Grief, whelming grief, drowns all my faculties,
And leaves me nought but tears.

EDGAR.

Rise, rise, ELFRIDA!

ELFRIDA.

Shall he then live?

EDGAR.

He shall, he shall, my fair;
If so he quit the realm within the space
Our sentence limited.

ELFRIDA.

Oh, stop not there;
That sentence will be death to ATHELWOLD.
Can he who liv'd but in thy gracious smiles;
Who pin'd, if chance those smiles a single hour
Were dealt him thriftily; think, can he bear
The infamy of exile?

EDGAR.

Hear me, ATHELWOLD,
Did I not shower on thy much-favour'd head
My thickest honors, and with gift so ready
As out-ran all request? did I not hold thee
Still in such open confidence of friendship,
Such love as—

ATHELWOLD.

Rather stab me than repeat it.

EDGAR.

Yet give me hearing. I repeat not this
To taunt or gall thee. On my soul, thy worth
Did o'ertop all those honors, and thy zeal
Kept pace with my best love. Nor till this fraud—
But such a fraud! look there, look on that face.
Thou know'st me, ATHELWOLD; hast seen me gaze
On a soft yielding fair one till my eye
Shot flames. Perdition seize me, if this heart
Knew love till now!

ATHELWOLD.

I see it plainly, Sire,
Nor say I ought to lessen my offence,

No—here I kneel. Oh! cast but on my misery
One kind forgiving glance, this ready sword
Shall expiate all.

ELFRIDA.

Ah! will you!—must he die?

EDGAR.

No, stay thee, ATHELWOLD, and sheath thy sword;
I never yet (save but this hour of rage)
Deem'd thee my subject. Thou wast still my friend;
And, injur'd as I am, thou still art such:
I do forego the word; to banish thee,
Or seal thy death, transcends a friend's just right.

ELFRIDA.

Ah, gen'rous deed! ah, godlike goodness! Virgins,
The King has pardon'd him. Teach EDGAR's praise
To Harewood's furthest echo! Oh! my Sovereign,
What words can speak my thanks!

EDGAR.

Nay, check these transports,
Lest, if I see thee thus, my soul forget
Its milder purpose. I will leave thee, Lady;
Yet first my lips must press this gentle hand,
And breathe one soft sigh of no common fervor.
Now on, my Lords: we'll hence unto our realm
Of Mercia, yet in passing thro' this forest,
As was our purpose, will we hunt the roebuck.
Earl ATHELWOLD attend us to the chace.

[*Exeunt* KING, ARDULPH, and Train,

SCENE III.

ATHELWOLD, ELFRIDA, &c. &c.

ATHELWOLD.

I will, my Liege. ELFRIDA, I have much
For thy lov'd ear, and have but one farewell
To tell it all—and yet—

ELFRIDA.

Ah! loiter not,
It may enrage. Farewel. Be sure, take heed
I come not in your talk : avoid ev'n thinking;
Check ev'n the sighs of absence. Haste, my Earl,
Oh! haste thee, as thou lov'st thy constant wife.

[Exit ATHELWOLD.]

SCENE IV.

ORGAR, ELFRIDA, ALBINA, CHORUS.

ORGAR.

Thy constant wife! ah! stain of all thy race,
Degen'rate girl! Henceforth be Orgar deem'd
Of soft and dovelike temper, who could see
A child of his stoop to such vile abasement,
And yet forbore just wrath, forbore to draw
The blood she had defil'd from her mean veins!

ELFRIDA.

Check, Sir, your rage, and let your daughter
plead.

ORGAR.

Thou art not mine; some wicked elve or faye
Did spirit away my babe, and with curs'd charms
Thee in her cradle plac'd. Nay, hang not on me;
Dry, dry thy tears, they've done their office
amply,

EDGAR has pardon'd him. No, by my Earldom,
I cannot think of majesty thus meanly;
He'll yet avenge it; what if chance he should not!—
That stops not me: I have a heart, an arm,
A sword, can do me justice.

ELFRIDA.

Dearest father,
In pity spare my Lord!

ORGAR.

No: in this castle,
Ev'n in his own domain, will I await
To give him combat; I have known the time
When this good arm had hardihood enough
For thrice his prowess. What is lost thro' age,
My just cause shall supply, and he shall fall,
As did the traitor Oswald whose false tongue
Defam'd me to King Athelstan; to the ground
My sharp launce nail'd the caitiff.

[*Exit ORGAR into the Castle.*]

SCENE V.

ELFRIDA, ALBINA, CHORUS.

ELFRIDA.

Think, my Lord,
 Will ATHELWOLD, will he enter the lists
 Where conquest would be parricide! alas!
 He hears me not. Go! thou obdurate father,
 A daughter's tears will but the more provoke thee:
 I will not follow him. No, poor ELFRIDA,
 All thou can'st do is here to stand and weep,
 And feel that thou art wretched.

ALBINA.

Dearest mistress,
 Restrain this flood of tears! Perhaps—

ELFRIDA.

Perhaps!
 Ah! mock me not with hopes.

ALBINA.

We do not mean it,
 For Hope, tho' 'tis pale Sorrow's only cordial,
 Has yet a dull and opiate quality,
 Enfeebling what it lulls: it suits not you,
 For as we fear—

ELFRIDA.

Do you too fear! alas!
 I flatter'd my poor soul that all its fears
 Were Grief's distemper'd coinage; that my love

Rais'd causeless apprehensions, and at length
 My Father and the King would both forgive him.
 My joy broke forth too rashly. My Lord's safety
 Not half secur'd—my pleading not half heard—
 I should have strove to calm my Father's rage
 In EDGAR's presence; won their joint forgiveness,
 That both, with mutual friendship, might have
 clasp'd
 My sorrowing Lord.

ALBINA.

We fear that sorrow more
 Than either's rage. We fear his fallen virtue.
 Self condemnation works most strongly in him,
 Ev'n to despondency. When EDGAR pardon'd,
 No joy flush'd on his cheek; we mark'd him well,
 He shew'd no sign of Welcome. No, he took it
 As who should say: "to give me ought but death
 "Is a poor boon, unwish'd and unaccepted."
 Too much we fear he'll do some impious act—

ELFRIDA.

What! on his life! I thought I had explor'd
 Each various face of danger: this escap'd me—
 It suits his fix'd remorse—but yet he will not:
 No, ATHELWOLD, thou wilt not kill ELFRIDA.

ALBINA.

Oh! may his love preserve him! May these shades
 Receive him soon in peace! To this blest end
 You, sure, should strive to calm your Father's
 rage,
 At least not suffer him, as now retir'd,

To brood o'er his revenge; for in the gloom
 Of solitude, tho' Peace can sit and smile,
 Tho' meek Content can keep her constant calm,
 Ev'n in the loneliest shades, yet let not Wrath
 Or black Revenge approach the chearless scene,
 Lest soon they flame to madness.

ELFRIDA.

True, ALBINA :

I'll therefore hasten to my Father's presence,
 And try each winning art to calm his fury.
 (Tho' ill such art becomes me) yet I'll aim it.

SCENE VI.

ALBINA, CHORUS.

ODE.

Air by the Third Virgin.

Say, will no white-rob'd son of light,
 Swift-darting from his heav'nly height,
 Here deign to take his hallow'd stand;
 Here wave his amber locks, unfold
 His pinions cloth'd with downy gold,
 Here smiling stretch his tutelary wand?

Air by the Fourth Virgin.

Ah! you, ye host of saints, for ye have known
 Each dreary path in life's perplexing maze,
 Tho' now ye circle the eternal throne,
 With harpings high of inexpressive praise,

CHORUS.

Will not your train descend in radiant state
To break with mercy's beam this gathering cloud
of fate?

SECOND VIRGIN *speaks.*

'Tis silence all. No son of light
Darts swiftly from his heavenly height,
No train of radiant saints defend.
“Mortals, in vain ye hope to find,
“If guilt, if fraud has stain'd your mind,
“Or saint to hear or angel to descend.”
So Truth proclaims. I hear the sacred sound
Burst from the centre of her burning throne,
Where aye She sits with star-wreath'd lustre
crown'd:

A bright sun clasps her adamant zone.

So Truth proclaims: Her awful voice I hear,
With many a solemn pause it slowly meets my ear.

(SYMPHONY)

ALBINA.

“Attend, ye sons of men; attend and say,
“Does not enough of my refulgent ray
“Break thro' the veil of your mortality?”
Say, does not reason in this form descry
Unnumber'd nameless glories that surpass
The Angel's floating pomp, the Seraph's glowing
grace?

Shall then your earthborn daughters vie
With me? Shall she whose brightest eye
But emulates the diamond's blaze,

Whose cheek but mocks the peach's bloom,
Whose breath the hyacinth's perfume,
Whose melting voice the warbling woodlark's lays,
Shall she be deem'd my rival? Shall a form
Of elemental dross, of mould'ring clay
Vie with these charms imperial? The poor
worm
Shall prove her contest vain; life's little day
Shall pass, and she is gone: while I appear
Flush'd with the bloom of youth thro' Heav'n's
eternal year.

Know, Mortals, know, ere first ye sprung,
Ere first these orbs in ether hung,
I shone amid the heav'nly throng;
These eyes beheld Creation's day,
This voice began the choral lay,
And taught Archangels their triumphant song.
Pleas'd I survey'd bright Nature's gradual birth;
Saw infant light with kindling lustre spread,
Soft vernal fragrance clothe the flow'ring earth,
And Ocean heave on his extended bed.
Saw the tall pine aspiring pierce the sky,
The tawny lion stalk, the rapid eagle fly.

Last Man arose the monarch of the rest,
Heav'n's hallow'd image stamp'd upon his
breast;
And as he rose the high behest was given,
That I alone of all the host of Heav'n,
Should reign protectress of the godlike youth:
Thus the Almighty spake. He spake and called me
TRUTH.

FULL CHORUS.

Goddess! we hear thy holy tongue
That, on Creation's glorious day,
Began the choral lay,
And taught Archangels their triumphant song.

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

ARDULPH, ALBINA, CHORUS.

ARDULPH.

WHERE is Earl ORGAR! where his beauteous daughter!

I bring from ATHELWOLD a joyful message,
Crown'd with his sov'reign's mandate. From the chace

King EDGAR means, his Mercian tour deferr'd,
To hasten back to court, and there with tilt,
With tournament, and triumph, solemnize
The nuptials of his friend. I need not add
That fair ELFRIDA's presence, and her father's,
Are swift demanded.

ALBINA.

Can Lord ARDULPH's tongue
Proclaim such tidings with this seeming joy!

ARDULPH.

Virgin, that tongue already has betray'd
How much this heart detests base ATHELWOLD:
Ye know that I (and in the deed I glory)
Contriv'd the meeting of the King and ORGAR
Here in this castle. If I further mean
That they should meet at court, that ELFRID' too
Should grace the meeting; and if, arm'd for this,

As now I am, I bring a monarch's mandate,
'Tis not the vain opponence of weak women
Can counteract my purpose.

ALBINA.

Cruel insult!

ARDULPH.

Bear ye within your breasts (what all who breathe
Bear, nature-planted) that instinctive love
Of self, that prompts to honours and advancement?
Then will ye join in aid of my designs.
Have ye that innate fear, that ever trembles
To meet the frown of priz'd authority?
Then dare ye not oppose them. Thus alike
Both of your hopes and fears, the strongest curbs
Of human action, I secure your silence,
If not your wish'd assistance.

ALBINA.

Know, vain courtier!

There is a stronger curb than hope, or fear,
Or each mean passion, cherish'd by false statesmen,
That reins our actions. 'Tis the curb of Truth.
She guides our footsteps thro' this vale of life,
In path distinct and plain. For tho' across
The way ten thousand vain meanders lead,
Yet, led by her, boldly, yet circumspect,
We pace secure along the solemn scene.
But see, Earl ORGAR comes. [ARDULPH retires.

SCENE II.

ORGAR, ELFRIDA, ALBINA, CHORUS.

ELFRIDA.

My honor'd father,
Are you still merciless! alas, I hop'd—

ORGAR.

What could'st thou hope, ELFRIDA! could'st thou
think
I e'er would pardon his base perfidy,
Or thy ignoble fondness?

ELFRIDA.

Good my Lord,
Frown not so sternly on me! I would fain
Touch your relenting soul; fain win your heart
To fatherly forgiveness. For thro' life
I've oft had pleasing proof, how that forgiveness
Stoop'd to my fond persuasion.

ORGAR.

Off! too off.

ELFRIDA.

Yet pity me, now that persuasion leaves me,
And cannot plead as then. No: my sad thoughts
Are all on wing, all following ATHELWOLD,
Like unseen minist'ring spirits—Pardon, Sir;
That frown shall check me—I'll not mention him.

ORGAR.

I charge thee not. I charge thee on thy duty.

ELFRIDA.

Yet let me plead for my own weakness; plead
For that soft sympathy of soul, which you
Deem base and servile. Base perhaps it might be
Were I of bolder sex. But I, alas!—

Ah! pardon me, if nature stamp'd me woman,
Gave me a heart soft, gentle, prone to pity,
And very fearful: fearful, sure, with cause
At this dread hour, when, if one luckless word,
One sigh break forth unbid, it may rekindle
The monarch's rage—what has my frenzy utter'd?
My rash tongue more inflames him. Oh! assist me!
Ye are not thus oppress'd with inward horror:
Kneel, plead, persuade, convince—

ALBINA.

Alas! my mistress:

What may a servant's accents do to appease
Such rage as this!

ORGAR.

Ye well may spare them, maidens,
Know my firm soul's resolv'd, and be my heart
Deem'd base as ATHELWOLD's if it foregoes
Its honest resolution. Think what I,
What Britain suffers from the traitor's fraud:
Had EDGAR took my daughter to his bed,
Our British line, which now is doom'd to sink
In vile subjection, had again assum'd
The pall of royalty with half its power;

In time perchance the whole. But this false Saxon
Shall with his life repay me.

SCENE III.

ARDULPH, ORGAR, ELFRIDA, ALBINA,
CHORUS.

ORGAR.

How now! ARDULPH!

ARDULPH.

The King, Sir, greets you well, and, to your ear
Wills me in private to convey his pleasure.

ORGAR.

Retire we then into the neighb'ring grove.

[*Exeunt ORGAR and ARDULPH.*]

SCENE IV.

ELFRIDA, ALBINA, CHORUS.

ALBINA.

O hapless Lady! in that courtly youth,
Who leads your father hence, behold a foe
To your lov'd husband, whose politic wiles
We fear would work his ruin, were the rage
Of ORGAR calm'd, or the King's love abated.

ELFRIDA.

What aims the villain now!

ALBINA.

He brings a message,
Or says he brings, to draw you hence to court;
Your father eagerly will hear the tale.

ELFRIDA.

Say'st thou, to court?

ALBINA.

In this, to EDGAR's mandate
He joins the wish of ATHELWOLD.

ELFRIDA.

Then 'tis feign'd.

ALBINA.

He talks of festive sports, and tournaments,
Ev'n now prepar'd to celebrate your nuptials,
Grac'd with the royal presence. Much we fear
'Tis but to lure you by such change of place,
The readier to renounce your plighted faith.

ELFRIDA.

Renounce my plighted faith! bear witness, Heaven!
No change of place, were that dread place the grave
(A place more wish'd for now than EDGAR's court)
Could e'er induce the crime. Perish this frame!
This feeble frame of animated dust!
My soul will live, will love its ATHELWOLD.
Hark! whence that noise? I heard a hasty footstep.

ALBINA.

O Heav'ns! 'tis Edwin.

SCENE V.

EDWIN, ELFRIDA, ALBINA, CHORUS.

ELFRIDA.

Edwin, ah! that look
Bespeaks too well the horror of thy errand,
Tell it me all.

EDWIN.

Alas!

ELFRIDA.

Nay, do not pause :
Tell it me all. I think it will not kill me ;
Repeat each circumstance. I'm ready, EDWIN,
Ev'n for the worst.

EDWIN.

Then hear, and Heav'n support thee!
Soon as the stag had left yon westward thicket,
The King dismiss'd his lords, each several ways
To their best sport, bidding Earl ATHELWOLD,
Lord SEOFRID and myself attend his person.
Thus, parted from the rest, the Monarch pierc'd
A darkling dell which open'd on a lawn
Thick set with shade around. Suddenly here
He turn'd his steed and cry'd : " This place befits
" Our purpose well. "

ELFRIDA.

Purpose! what purpose, EDWIN!
'Twas predetermin'd then, dissembling King!
How could I trust or hope—

EDWIN.

Yet give me hearing :
 Thus with a grave composure and calm eye
 King EDGAR spake: "now, hear me ATHELWOLD,
 Thy King has pardon'd this thy trait'rous act,
 From all disloyal baseness to thy prince
 Thou stand'st absolv'd. Yet know there still remains
 Somewhat to cancel more : as man to man,
 As friend to friend, now ATHELWOLD I call
 thee

Straight to defend thy life with thy good sword.
 If thy arm prosper, this my dying tongue
 Shall pardon thee and bless thee. If thou fall'st,
 Thy parting breath must to my right resign
 ELFRIDA's beauties." At the word, both drew,
 Both fought. But ATHELWOLD's was ill-play'd
 passion,

He aim'd his falchion at his Monarch's head
 Only to leave his own brave breast defenceless,
 And, on the instant, EDGAR's rapid sword
 Pierc'd my dear master's heart. He fell to earth,
 And falling cry'd. "This wound atones for all :
 " EDGAR thus full aveng'd will pardon me,
 " And my true wife with chaste connubial tears
 " Embalm my memory." He smil'd and died.

ELFRIDA.

Nay, come not round me, Virgins, nor support me,
 I do not swoon nor weep. I call not Heaven
 T' avenge my wretchedness. I do not wish
 The tyrant's arm may wither with cold palsies ;
 No, I am very patient. Heav'n is just,

And, when the measure of his crimes is full,
 Will bare its red right-arm and launch its light'ning.
 Till then, ye elements ! rest; and, thou firm earth,
 Ope not thy yawning jaws, but let this monster
 Stalk his due time on thy affrighted surface.
 Yes—let him still go on ; still execute
 His savage purposes, and daily make
 More widows weep as I do.

[After weeping and a pause.

Foolish tears !

Why flow ye thus unbidden ! What have tears
 To do with grief like mine ?

ALBINA.

Help, help, my Sisters,
 To bear her to the castle.

SCENE VI.

ORGAR, ELFRIDA, EDWIN, ALBINA,
 CHORUS.

ORGAR.

What is this ?
 Methought I heard the voice of loud lament ;
 ELFRIDA, ah !

ELFRIDA.

Is not my father there ?
 Withhold me not. I'll fall at his dear feet :
 Oh ! Sir, behold your child thus lowly prostrate ;
 Avenge her wrongs, avenge your poor ELFRIDA !
 Your helpless widow'd daughter.

O R G A R

Widow'd—say'st thou,
Is he then slain?

ELFRIDA.

Inhospitably butcher'd;
The tyrant's savage self—Stand you thus cool?
Where is the British spirit! Where the fire
Of Belin's race!—O foolishness of grief!
Alas! I had forgot; had EDGAR spar'd him,
That sword to which my madness call'd for ven-
geance
Was meant, ere long, to do the bloody deed
And make the murder parricide. Have I
No friend to do me right?

O R G A R.

Patience, my child:
I am thy friend, thy father. Trust my care.
EDWIN, a word.

[He whispers a moment to EDWIN who goes out.]
Retire, my dearest daughter:
Virgins, conduct her in.

ELFRIDA.

My father, no—
What do you do! I must not be with-held;
I'll to yon bloody dell and clasp my husband,
My murder'd husband. Why restrain me, Sir!
Can my sad eye dart fire to his cold breast
And light up life anew?

G

ELFRIDA.

ORGAR.

Go in, my child,
And seek tranquillity.

ELFRIDA.

Tranquillity!

I know her well; she is Death's pale-ey'd sister,
She's now in yonder grove closing the lids
Of my poor ATHELWOLD. That office done,
She'll bear his soul upon her gentle plumes
Up to the realms of joy. I'll follow then;
I know he'd have it so: He'll not be blest
Ev'n on his throne of bliss till I am with him.

ALBINA.

This way, my dearest mistress.

ELFRIDA.

Hold, nay, hold!

Crowd not around me. Let me pause awhile:

ALBINA, thou alone shalt join my misery;
I've much to utter to thy friendly ear.

Lead on, thou gentle maid, thy single arm
Shall prop my trembling frame; thy single voice
Speak peace to my afflictions.

[Exit, leaning on ALBINA.]

ORGAR.

Follow her not,
Virgins; let no unbidden step approach her.

SCENE VII.

ARDULPH, EDWIN, ORGAR, CHORUS.

ORGAR.

ARDULPH, the deed is done.

ARDULPH.

I've learnt it, Sir,

Briefly from EDWIN. And the manner shews
All my surmises just.

ORGAR.

It does, my friend,
And we are both aveng'd. My joy were perfect
Did not the wayward sorrow of my child,
That seems to urge her to the verge of frenzy,
Allay it much. Where, EDWIN, was the King
When late you left him?

EDWIN.

At my master's side,
Repentant of the stroke.

ORGAR.

Comes he not back
To Harewood?

SECOND VIRGIN.

Heav'n forbid! ELFRIDA's brain
Would madden at the sight.

ARDULPH.

My counsel is,
That with what speed her anguish will permit
You bear her to the palace.

SECOND VIRGIN.

No, for pity
Do not profane this sabbath of her grief.
Oh! be her sorrows sacred.

ORGAR.

Fear not, Virgin,
Her peace is my best care, and, to insure it,
I'll instant hence to old Earl EGBERT's castle
(Some few miles west of Harewood) my fast
friend,

And there prepare fit lodgment for the King
Till my child's grief abate. Do thou, Lord

ARDULPH,

By EDWIN's guidance speed thee to King EDGAR,
And with all loyal greetings from his vassal
Urge him to meet me there.

ARDULPH.

'Tis sagely plann'd ;
I'll haste with the commission.

[*Exeunt* ARDULPH and EDWIN.

ORGAR.

You, ye Virgins,
Attend my child with care, Nor e'er let slip

A happy interval when your soft tongues
 May hint at EDGAR's praise; till, won by practice,
 She bear your fuller blazon. ELFRID's welfare
 Requires this friendly office at your hands,
 And EDGAR's virtues bear such genuine lustre
 That truth itself directs.

[Exit ORGAR.

SECOND VIRGIN.

As truth directs
 So only shall we act. This day has shewn
 What dire effects await its violation.

SCENE VIII.

ALBINA, CHORUS.

ALBINA,

Have ORGAR and lord ARDULPH left the grove?

SECOND VIRGIN.

They have, my Sister, each on separate purpose.

ALBINA.

Then hear and aid ELFRIDA's last resolve,
 Who takes the only way stern fate has left her
 To save her plighted faith, for ever pure,
 To her dead ATHELWOLD.

SECOND VIRGIN.

Forbid it, Patience,
 Forbid it that submissive calm of soul

Which teaches meek-ey'd Piety to smile
Beneath the scourge of Heav'n.

ALBINA.

Ye need not fear it;
Huge and o'er-bearing as her mis'ry is,
It cannot so oblit'rate from her breast
The deep-grav'd rule of duty; her pure soul
Means on the instant to devote itself
To Heav'n and Holiness. Assist her straight,
Lest EDGAR's fondness, or her father's threats
Prevent the blest intention; see, she comes;
Stand in devoutest attitude around her,
And breathe some hymn of high and solemn strain,
That angels from their thrones of light may hear,
And ratify her vow.

SCENE IX.

ELFRIDA, ALBINA, CHORUS.

(CHAUNT)

Hear, Angels, hear!
Angels, hear!

ELFRIDA.

Hear first, that ATHELWOLD's sad widow swears
To rear a hallow'd convent o'er the place,
Where stream'd his blood: there will she weep thro'
life,
Immur'd with this chaste throng of Virgins. There

Each day shall six times hear her full voic'd choir
 Chaunt the slow requiem o'er her martyr'd Lord.
 There too when midnight lours with awful gloom,
 She'll rise observant of the stated call
 Of waking grief; bear the dim livid taper
 Along the winding aile, and at the altar
 Kiss ev'ry pale shrine with her trembling lips;
 Press the cold stone with her bent knee, and call
 On sainted ATHELWOLD.

(CHAUNT)

Hear, Angels, hear!
 Angels, hear!

ELFRIDA.

Hear next, that ATHELWOLD's sad widow swears
 Never to violate the holy vow
 She to his truth first plighted: swears to bear
 The sober singleness of widowhood
 To her cold grave. If from this chaste resolve
 She ev'n in thought should swerve; if gaudy
 pomp,
 Or flatt'ring greatness e'er should tempt one wish
 To stray beyond this purpose, may that Heav'n,
 Which hears the vow, punish its violation
 As Heav'nly justice ought!

GRAND CHORUS.

Hear, Angels, hear!
 Hear from these nether thrones of light,
 And oh! in golden characters record

Each firm, immutable, immortal word !
Then wing your solemn flight
Up to the Heav'n of Heav'ns, and there
Hang the conspicuous tablet high,
'Mid the dread records of eternity.

THE END.

INKLE AND YARICO,

AN

OPERA

IN THREE ACTS,

WRITTEN

BY GEORGE COLMAN, junior.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

INKLE.

Sir CHRISTOPHER CURRY,

MEDIUM.

CAMPLEY.

TRUDGE.

MATE.

Planters, &c.

Women.

{ YARICO.

{ NARCISSE.

{ WOWSKI.

{ PATTY.

SCENE. — *First on the Main of America, afterwards
in Barbadoes.*

INKLE AND YARICO,

AN OPERA.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *An American Forest.*

Enter Medium, running across the stage as pursued by the Blacks.

Med. NEPHEW! Trudge! run—scamper! scour—fly! Zounds, what harm did I ever do to be hunted to death by a pack of black bloodhounds! Why, Nephew! Oh! confound your long sums in arithmetic! I'll take care of myself, and if we must have any arithmetic, dot and carry on for my money. [*Exit.*

Enter Inkle and Trudge hastily.

Trudge. Oh! that ever I was born to leave pen, ink and powder for this!

Inkle. Trudge, how far are the sailors before us?

Trudge. I'll run and see, Sir, directly.

Inkle. Blockhead, come here. The savages are close upon us; we shall scarce be able to recover our party. Get behind this tuft of trees with me; they'll pass us, and we may then recover the ship with safety.

Trudge. (going behind) Oh! Threadneedle-street Thread—

Inkle. Peace.

Trudge. (hiding)—Needle-street. (They hide behind trees. Natives cross. After a long pause, Inkle looks from the tree.)

Inkle. Trudge.

Trudge. Sir (in a whisper)

Inkle. Are they all gone by?

Trudge. Won't you look and see?

Inkle. (looking round) So, all's safe at last. (coming forward) Nothing like policy in these cases; but you'd have run on like a booby! A tree, I fancy, you'll find in future the best resource in a hot pursuit.

Trudge. Oh charming! It's a retreat for a king, Sir; Mr. Medium, however, has not got up in it: your uncle, Sir, has run on like a booby, and has got up with our party by this time, I take it, who are now most likely at the shore. But what are we to do next, Sir?

Inkle. Reconnoitre a little, and then proceed.

Trudge. Then pray, Sir, proceed to reconnoitre; for the sooner the better.

Inkle. Then look out, d'ye hear, and tell me if you discover any danger.

Trudge. Eh! Oh Lord!—The ship is under sail, Sir.

Inkle. They may report me dead, perhaps, and dispose of my property at the next island.

(The vessels appear under sail)

Trudge. Ah! there they go. (A gun fir'd) That is the last report ever we shall hear from 'em, I'm afraid—That's as much as to say, Good bye to ye. And here we are left—two fine, full grown babes in the wood.

Inkle. What an ill tim'd accident! Just too when my speedy union with Narcissa, at Barbadoes, wou'd so much advance my interest. Something must be hit upon, and speedily; but what resource! (*thinking*)

Trudge. The old one — a tree, Sir; it's all we have for it now. What wou'd I give now to be perch'd upon a high stool, with our brown desk squeez'd into the pit of my stomach—scribbling away on an old parchment! — But all my red ink will be spill'd by an old black pin of a negro.

SONG.

Last Valentine's Day.

A voyage o'er seas had not enter'd my head,
Had I known on which side to butter my bread,
Heigho! sure I—for hunger must die!

I've sail'd like a booby; come here in a squall,
Where, alas! there's no bread to be butter'd at all!

Oho! I'm a terrible booby!

Oh! what a sad booby am I!

II.

In London, what gay chop-house signs in the street!
But the only sign here is of nothing to eat.

Heigho! that I—for hunger shou'd die!

My mutton's all lost; I'm a poor starving elf,
And for all the world like a lost mutton myself:

Oho! I shall die a lost mutton!

Oh! what a lost mutton am I!

III.

For a neat slice of beef, I cou'd roar like a bull;
And my stomach's so empty, my heart is quite full.

Heigho! that I—for hunger shou'd die!

But grave without meat, I must here meet my grave,
 For my bacon, I fancy, I never shall save;
 Oho! I shall ne'er save my bacon!
 I can't save my bacon, not I!

Trudge. Hum! I was thinking—I was thinking,
 Sir—if so many natives cou'd be caught, how much
 they might fetch at the West India markets!

Inkle. Scoundrel! is this a time to jest?

Trudge. No, faith, Sir. Hunger is too sharp to be
 jested with. As for me, I shall starve for want of
 food. Now you may meet a luckier fate: you are
 able to extract the square root, Sir; and that's the
 very best provision you can find to live upon.
 But I (*noise at a distance*) Mercy on us! here they
 come again.

Inkle. Confusion! Deserted on one side, and
 press'd on the other, which way shall I turn?—This
 cavern may prove a safe retreat to us for the present.
 I'll enter, cost what it will.

Trudge. O Lord no, don't, don't! — We shall
 pay too dear for our lodging, depend on't.

Inkle. This is no time for debating. You are
 at the mouth of it, lead the way, Trudge.

Trudge. What! go in before your honour! I know
 my place better, I assure you—I might walk into
 more mouths than one perhaps. [*Aside.*

Inkle. Coward! then follow me. (*Noise again*)

Trudge. I must, Sir; I must! Ah Trudge! Trudge!
 what a damn'd hole are you getting into!

[*Exeunt into a cavern.*

SCENE, *a Cave, decorated with skins of wild beasts, feathers &c. in the middle of the scene, a rude kind of curtain, by way of door to an apartment.*

Enter Inkle and Trudge, as from the mouth of the cavern.

Trudge. Why, Sir! Sir! you must be mad to go any farther.

Inkle. So far at least we have proceeded with safety. Ha! no bad specimen of savage elegance. These ornaments wou'd be worth something in England—We have little to fear here, I hope; this cave rather bears the pleasing face of a profitable adventure.

Trudge. Very likely Sir! But for a pleasing face, it has the cursed'st ugly mouth I ever saw in my life. Now do, Sir, get off as fast as you can. Now pray do, my good master, take my advice, and run away.

Inkle. Rascal! Talk again of going out, and I'll flea you alive.

Trudge. That's just what I expect for coming in—

Inkle. This curtain seems to lead to another apartment; I'll draw it.

Trudge. No, no, no, don't; don't! We may be call'd to account for disturbing the company: you may get a curtain lecture, perhaps, Sir.

Inkle. Peace, booby, and stand on your guard.

Trudge. Oh! what will become of us! Some grim seven foot fellow ready to scalp us.

Inkle. By heaven! a woman!

As the curtain draws, Yarico and Wowski discover'd asleep.

Trudge. A woman! (*aside*) (*Loud*) But let him come on; I'm ready, dam'me! I don't fear facing the devil himself.—Faith it is a woman—fast asleep, too.

Inkle. And beautiful as an angel.

Trudge. And egad! there seems to be a nice little plump bit in the corner; only she's an angel of rather a darker sort.

Inkle. Hush! keep back—she wakes [*Yarico comes forward—Inkle and Trudge retire to opposite sides of the scene*]

SONG.—Yarico.

When the chace of day is done,
And the shaggy lion's skin,
Which for us our warriors win,
Decks our cell at set of sun,
Worn with toil, with sleep opprest,
I press my mossy bed, and sink to rest.

II.

Then once more I see our train,
With all our chace renew'd again :
Once more 'tis day
Once more our prey
Gnashes his angry teeth, and foams in vain,
Again in sullen haste he flies,
Tak'n in the toil, again he lies,
Again he roars, and in my slumbers dies.

Inkle. Our language!

Trudge. Zounds! she has thrown me into a cold sweat.

Yar. Hark! I heard a noise! Wowski, awake! whence can it proceed! [*She wakes Wowski, and*

they both come forward—Yarico towards Inkle—Wowski towards Trudge]

Yar. Ah! what form is this! —are you a man?

Inkle. True flesh and blood, my charming heathen, I promise you.

Yar. What harmony in his voice! What a shape! How fair his skin too! (*gazing*)

Trudge. This must be a lady of quality by her staring.

Yar. Say, stranger, whence come you?

Inkle. From a far distant island, driven on this coast by distress, and deserted by my companions.

Yar. And do you know the danger that surrounds you here? Our woods are filled with beasts of prey; my countrymen too — (yet I think they cou'dn't find the heart) — might kill you — It wou'd be a pity if you fell in their way—I think I shou'd weep if you came to any harm.

Trudge. Oho! It's time, I see, to begin making interest with the chambermaid. (*Takes Wowski apart*)

Inkle. How wild and beautiful! Sure, there's magic in her shape and she has rivetted me to the place; but where shall I look for safety? let me fly and avoid my death.

Yar. Oh! no, but—(*as if puzzled*) well then, die, stranger, but don't depart. I will try to preserve you, and if you are kill'd, Yarico must die too. Yet 'tis I alone can save you; your death is certain without my assistance; and indeed, indeed, you shall not want it.

Inkle. My kind Yarico! but what means must be us'd for my safety?

Yar. My cave must conceal you; none enter it since my father was slain in battle. I will bring you food by day, then lead you to our unfrequented groves by moonlight to listen to the nightingale. If you should sleep, I'll watch you, and wake you when there's danger.

Inkle. Generous maid! then, to you I will owe my life; and whilst it lasts nothing shall part us.

Yar. And shan't it, shan't it indeed?

Inkle. No, my Yarico! For, when an opportunity offers to return to my country, you shall be my companion.

Yar. What! cross the seas?

Inkle. Yes, help me to discover a vessel, and you shall enjoy wonders. You shall be deck'd in silks, my brave maid, and have a house drawn with horses to carry you.

Yar. Nay, do not laugh at me—but is it so?

Inkle. It is indeed!

Yar. Oh! wonder! I wish my countrywomen cou'd see me—But won't your warriors kill us?

Inkle. No: our only danger on land is here.

Yar. Then let us retire further into the cave. Come—your safety is in my keeping.

Inkle. I follow you—Yet, can you run some risk in following me?

DUETT.

O say, bonny Lass.

Ink. O say, simple maid, have you form'd any notion
Of all the rude dangers in crossing the ocean?
When winds whistle shrilly, ah! won't they remind you,
To sigh with regret for the grot left behind you?

Yar. Ah! no, I cou'd follow, and sail the world over,
Nor think of my grot when I look at my lover!
The winds which blow round us, your arms for my
pillow,
Will lull us to sleep, whilst we're rock'd by each
billow.

Both. O say then, my true love, we never will sunder,
Nor shrink from the tempest, nor dread the big
thunder,
Whilst constant we'll laugh at all changes of
weather,
And journey all over the world both together.
[*Exeunt thro' the cut of the rock.*]

Manent Trudge and Wowski.

Trudge. Why! you speak English as well as I,
my little Wowski.

Wows. Iss.

Trudge. Iss! And you learnt it from a strange
man, that tumbled from a big boat, many moons
ago, you say?

Wows. Iss—Teach me—Teach good many.

Trudge. And what became of him at last! What
did your countrymen do for the poor fellow?

Wows. Eat him one day—Our chief kill him:

Trudge. Mercy on us! Ah! poor Trudge! your
killing comes next.

Wows. No, no—not you—no—(*running to him
anxiously*)

Trudge. No! why, what shall I do if I get in their
paws?

Wows. I fight for you!

Trudge. Will you? Ecod she's a brave, good-

natur'd wench; she'll be worth a hundred of your English wives—Whenever they fight on their husband's account, it's with him, instead of for him, I fancy. But how the plague am I to live here?

Wow's. I feed you—bring you kid.

SONG.

One day, hear Mary say.

White man, never go away;
Tell me, why need you?
Stay with your *Wowski*, stay;
Wowski will feed you.
Cold moons are now coming in;
Ah! don't grieve me!
I'll wrap you in leopard's skin;
White man, don't leave me.

II.

And when all the sky is blue,
Sun makes warm weather,
I'll catch you a cockatoo,
Dress you in feather.
When cold comes, or when 'tis hot,
Ah! don't go grieve me!
Poor *Wowski* will be forgot—
White man, don't leave me!

Trudge. If my master and I find our way to England, you shall be part of our travelling equipage: and when I get there, I'll give you a couple of long rooms on a first floor, and visit you every evening as soon as I come from the counting-house. Do you like it?

Wow's. Iss.

Trudge. Damme! what a flashy fellow I shall

seem in the city! I'll get her a white boy to bring up the tea-kettle: then I'll teach you to write and dress hair.

Wows. You a great man in your country?

Trudge. Oh! yes, a very great man; I'm head clerk of the counting house, and first valet-de-chambre of the dressing room. I pounce parchments, powder hair, black shoes, ink paper, shave beards, and mend pens. But hold; I had forgot one material point—you ar'n't married, I hope?

Wows. No—you be my chum chum.

Trudge. So I will. Well, as my master seems king of this place, and has taken his Indian Queen already, I'll e'en be usher of the black rod here. But you have had a lover or two in your time; eh, Wowski?

Wows. Oh! iss, great many.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

A C T II.

SCENE, *the Quay at Barbadoes, with an Inn upon it. People employed in unloading Vessels, carrying Bales of Goods, &c.*

Enter Narcissa and Patty.

SONG.

FRESHLY now the breeze is blowing;
 As yon ship at anchor rides,
 Sullen waves, incessant flowing,
 Rudely dash against the sides :
 So my heart, its course impeded,
 Beats in my perturbed breast;
 Doubts, like waves by waves succeeded,
 Rise, and still deny it rest.

Patty. Well, Ma'am, as I was saying—

Nar. Well, say no more of what you were saying—Sure, Patty, you forget where you are; a little caution will be necessary now, I think.

Patty. Lord, Madam, how is it possible to help talking! We are in Barbadoes here to be sure—but then, Ma'am, one may let out a little in a private morning's walk by ourselves.

Nar. Nay, it's the same thing with you in doors.

Patty. I never blab, Ma'am, never, as I hope for a gown.

Nar. And your never blabbing, as you call it, depends chiefly on that hope, I believe — The unlocking my chest locks up all your faculties. An old silk gown makes you turn your back on all my

secrets; a large bonnet blinds your eyes, and a fashionable high handkerchief covers your ears, and stops your mouth at once, Patty.

Patty. Dear Ma'am, how can you think a body so mercenary! Am I always teasing you about gowns and gew-gaws and fallals and finery? Or do you take me for a conjurer, that nothing will come out of my mouth but ribbons? I have told the story of our voyage, indeed, to old Guzzle, the butler, who is very inquisitive, and between ourselves, is the ugliest—old quiz I ever saw in my life.

Nar. Well, well. I have seen him; pitted with the small-pox and a red face.

Patty. Right, Ma'am. It's for all the world like his master's cellar, full of holes and liquor; but when he asks me how you and I think of the matter, why, I look wise, and cry like other wise people who have nothing to say—All's for the best.

Nar. And, thus, you lead him to imagine I am but little inclined to the match.

Patty. Lord! Ma'am, how could that be? Why, I never said a word about Captain Campley.

Nar. Hush! hush! for heaven's sake.

Patty. Ay, there it is now—There, Ma'am, I'm as mute as a mack'el—That name strikes me dumb in a moment. I don't know how it is, but Captain Campley, some how or other, has the knack of stopping my mouth oft'ner than any body else, Ma'am.

Nar. His name again! Consider—Never mention it, I desire you.

Patty. Not I, Ma'am, not I. But if our voyage from England was so pleasant, it was n't owing to

Mr. Inkle, I'm certain. He did n't play the fiddle in our cabin, and dance on the deck, and come languishing with a glass of warm water in his hand when we were sea-sick. Ah! Ma'am, that water warm'd your heart, I'm confident. Mr. Inkle! No, no; Captain Cam—

Nar. There is no end to this! Remember, Patty, keep your secrecy, or you entirely lose my favour.

Patty. Never fear me, Ma'am. Remember, I'm as close as a patchbox. Mum's the word, Ma'am, I promise you.

SONG.

This maxim let ev'ry one hear
Proclaim'd from the north to the south,
What ever comes in at your ear
Should never run out at your mouth.
We servants, like servants of state,
Should listen to all and be dumb;
Let others harangue and debate,
We look wise—shake our heads—and are mum.

II.

The judge, in all dignity drest,
In silence hears barristers preach,
And then to prove silence is best,
He'll get up, and give 'em a speech.
By saying but little, the maid
Will keep her swain under her thumb;
And the lover that's true to his trade
Is certain to kiss and cry mum. [*Exit.*

Nar. How awkward is my present situation! Promis'd to one, who, perhaps, may never again be heard of; and who, I am sure, if he ever appears to claim me, will do it merely on the score of

interest—press'd too, by another, who has already, I fear, too much interest in my heart—what can I do? What plan can I follow?

Enter Campley.

Camp. Follow my advice, Narcissa, by all means. Enlist with me under the best banners in the world. General Hymen for my money.

Nar. Consider our situation.

Camp. That has been duly consider'd. In short, the case stands exactly thus; your intended spouse is all for money: I am all for love. He is a rich rogue; I am rather a poor honest fellow. He wou'd pocket your fortune; I will take you without a fortune in your pocket.

Nar. Oh! I am sensible of the favour, most gallant Captain Campley; and my father, no doubt, will be very much oblig'd to you.

Camp. Aye, there's the devil of it: Sir Christopher Curry's confounded good character—knocks me up at once. Yet I am not acquainted with him neither; not known to him, even by sight; being here only as a private gentleman on a visit to my old relation, out of regimentals, and so forth; and not introduc'd to the Governor as other officers of the place: but then the report of his hospitality—his odd, blunt, whimsical friendship—his whole behaviour—

Nar. All stare you in the face; eh, Campley!

Camp. They do till they put me out of countenance. But then again, when I stare *you* in the face, I can't think I have any reason to be asham'd of my proceedings—I stick here between my love and my

I

principle, like a song between a toast and a sentiment.

Nar. And if your love and your principle were put in the scales, you doubt which would weigh most?

Camp. Oh, no! I should act like a rogue, and let principle kick the beam; for love, Narcissa, is as heavy as lead, and, like a bullet from a pistol, cou'd never go thro' the heart if it wanted weight.

Nar. Or rather, like the pistol itself, that often goes off without any harm done. Your fire must end in smoke, I believe.

Camp. Never, whilst—

Nar. Nay, a truce to protestations at present.

SONG. — Rondeau.

Since 'tis vain to think of flying.

Mars would oft, his conquest over,
To the Cyprian Goddess yield;
Venus gloried in a lover,
Who, like him, cou'd brave the field.

Mars wou'd oft, &c.

II.

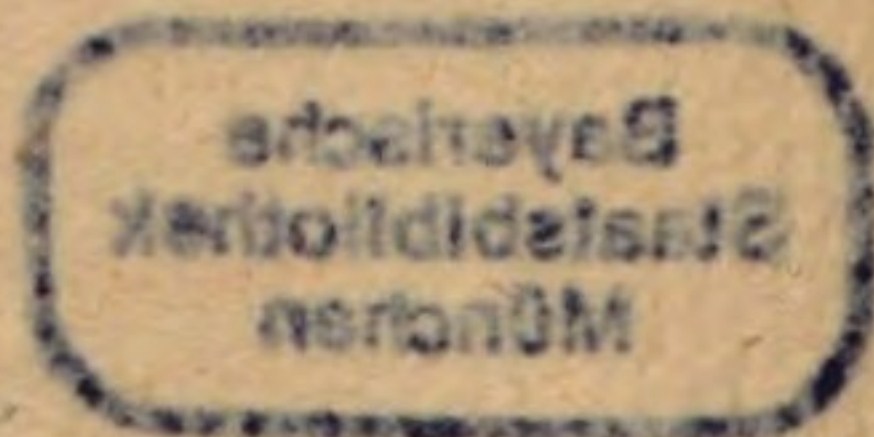
In the cause of battles hearty,
Still the God wou'd strive to prove,
He who fac'd an adverse party,
Fittest was to meet his love.

Mars wou'd oft, &c.

III.

Hear then, Captains, ye who bluster,
Hear the God of war declare,
Cowards never can pass muster,
Courage only wins the fair.

Mars wou'd oft, &c.



Enter Patty, hastily.

Patty. Oh lud! Ma'am, I'm frighten'd out of my wits! sure as I'm alive, Ma'am, Mr. Inkle is not dead! I saw his man, Ma'am, just now coming ashore in a boat with other passengers from the vessel that's come to the island. *[Exit Patty.]*

Nar. (to Camp.) Look ye, Mr. Campley: something has happen'd which makes me wave ceremonies—If you mean to apply to my father, remember that delays are dangerous.

Camp. Indeed!

Nar. I mayn't be always in the same mind, you know. *(smiling)*

Camp. Nay then—Gad, I'm almost afraid too—but living in this state of doubt is torment: I'll e'en put a good face on the matter; cock my hat, make my bow, and try to reason the Governor into compliance. Faint heart never won a fair Lady.

SONG.

Why shou'd I vain fears discover,
Prove a dying sighing swain!
Why turn shilly shally lover,
Only to prolong my pain?

II.

When we woo the dear enslaver,
Boldly ask, and she will grant;
How should we obtain a favour,
But by telling what we want?

III.

Should the nymph be found complying,
Nearly then the battle's won;
Parents think 'tis vain denying,
When half our work is fairly done.

[Exeunt.]

Enter Trudge and Wowski (as from the ship) with a dirty runner to one of the Inns.

Run. This way, Sir; if you will let me recommend—

Trudge. Come along, Wows! Take care of your furs and your feathers, my girl.

Wows. Iss.

Trudge. That's right—Somebody might steal 'em, perhaps.

Wows. Steal!—What that?

Trudge. Oh Lord! see what one loses by not being born in a Christian country!

Run. If you wou'd, Sir, but mention to your master the house that belongs to my master, the best accommodations on the quay—

Trudge. What's your sign, my lad?

Run. The Crown, Sir—Here it is.

Trudge. Well, get us a room for half an hour, and we'll come; and hark'ee! let it be light and airy, d'ye hear? My master has been us'd to your open apartments lately.

Run. Depend on it—Much oblig'd to you, Sir.

[*Exit.*

Wows. Who be that fine man? He, great Prince?

Trudge. A Prince—Ha! ha!—No, not quite a Prince—but he belongs to the Crown. But how do you like this, Wows? Isn't it fine?

Wows. Wonder!

Trudge. Fine men, eh?

Wows. Iss: all white men like you.

Trudge. Yes, all the fine men are like me, as

different from your people as powder and ink, or paper and blacking.

Wows. And fine lady—face like snow.

Trudge. What! the fine ladies' complexions! Oh! yes, exactly; for too much heat very often dissolves 'em! Then their dress too.

Wows. Your countrymen dress so?

Trudge. Better, better a great deal. Why, a young flashy Englishman will sometimes carry a whole fortune on his back. But did you mind the women! All here and there (*pointing before and behind*) they have it all from us in England—And then the fine things they carry on their heads, Wowski.

Wows. You need not love me now.

Trudge. Not love you! Zounds! have not I given you proofs!

Wows. Iss, great many: but now you get here; you forget poor Wowski!

Trudge. Not I: I'll stick to you like wax.

Wows. Ah! I fear! What make you love me now?

Trudge. Gratitude, to be sure.

Wows. What that?

Trudge. Ha! this it is now to live without education; the poor dull devils of the country are all in the practice of gratitude without finding out what it means, while we can tell the meaning of it with little or no practice at all—Lord, Lord! what a fine advantage Christian learning is! Hark'ee, Wows!

Wows. Iss.

Trudge. Now we've accomplish'd our landing,

I'll accomplish you. You remember the instructions I gave you on the voyage?

Wows. Iss.

Trudge. Let's see now—What are you to do when I introduce you to the Nobility, Gentry, and others—of my acquaintance?

Wows. Make believe sit down; then get up.

Trudge. Let me see you do it. (*She makes a low courtesy*) Very well! And how are you to recommend yourself, when you have nothing to say, amongst all our great friends?

Wows. Grin—shew my teeth.

Trudge. Right! they'll think you've liv'd with people of fashion: but suppose you meet an old shabby friend in misfortune, that you don't wish to be seen to speak to—what wou'd you do?

Wows. Look blind—not see him.

Trudge. Why wou'd you do that?

Wows. 'Cause I can't bear see good friend in distress.

Trudge. That's a good girl! and I wish every body cou'd boast of so kind a motive for such cursed cruel behaviour—odsbobs! I see Mr. Inkle—Go in, Wows—call for what you like best.

Wows. Then, I call for you; ah! I fear I not see you often now. But you come soon—

SONG.

Remember when we walk'd alone,
And heard so gruff the lion growl,
And when the moon so bright it shone,
We saw the wolf look up and howl:

I led you well, safe to our cell,
While tremblingly
You said to me,
—And kiss'd so sweet—dear *Wowski* tell,
How cou'd I live without ye?
II.

But now you come across the sea,
And tell me here no monsters roar;
You'll walk alone, and leave poor me,
When wolves to fright you howl no more.
But, ah! think well on our old cell,
Where tremblingly
You kiss'd poor me.

Perhaps you'll say—dear *Wowski* tell,
How cou'd I live without ye?
[*Exit Wowski.*

Trudge. Eh! oh! my master's talking to somebody
on the quay: who have we here?

Enter First Planter.

Plant. Hark'ee, young man! Is that young Indian
of your's going to market?

Trudge. Not she—she never went to market in
all her life.

Plant. I mean is she for our sale of slaves! Our
Black Fair?

Trudge. A Black Fair! Ha! ha! ha! You hold it
on a brown green, I suppose.

Plant. She's your slave, I take it.

Trudge. Yes; and I'm her humble servant, I take it.

Plant. Aye, ay, natural enough at sea—But at
how much do you value her?

Trudge. Just as much as she has sav'd me—my
own life.

Plant. Pshaw! you mean to sell her?

Trudge. (*staring*) Zounds! what a devil of a fellow! Sell Wows!—my poor, dear dingy wife!

Plant. Come, come, I've heard your story from the ship.—Don't let's haggle; I'll bid as fair as any trader amongst us: but no tricks upon travellers, young man, to raise your price—Your wife, indeed! Why, she's no Christian!

Trudge. No; but I am; so I shall do as I'd be done by, master *Black Market*; and if you were a good one yourself, you'd know, that fellow feeling for a poor body, who wants your help, is the noblest mark of our religion—I wou'dn't be articted clerk to such a fellow for the world.

Plant. Hey-day! The booby's in love with her! Why, sure, friend, you wou'd not live here with a Black!

Trudge. Plague on't; there it is. I shall be laugh'd out of my honesty here—But you may be jogging, friend: I may feel a little queer, perhaps, at shewing her face—but dam'me! if ever I do any thing to make me asham'd of shewing my own.

Plant. Why, I tell you, her very complexion—

Trudge. Rot her complexion!—I'll tell you what, Mr. Fair Trader: If your head and heart were to change places, I've a notion you'd be as black in the face as an ink-bottle.

Plant. Pshaw! The fellow's a fool—a rude rascal—he ought to be sent back to the savages again. He's not fit to live among us Christians.

[*Exit Planter.*

Trudge. Oh! here he is at last.

Enter Inkle and another Planter.

Inkle. Nay, Sir, I understand your customs well; your Indian markets are not unknown to me.

2d. Plant. And as you seem to understand business, I need not tell you that dispatch is the soul of it. Her name you say is—

Inkle. Yarico; but urge this no more I beg you—I must not listen to it. For, to speak freely, her anxious care of me demands that here—though here it may seem strange—I should avow my love for her.

Plant. Lord help you, for a merchant!—Tis the first time I ever heard a trader talk of love; except indeed the love of trade, and the love of the *Sweet Molly*, my ship.

Inkle. Then, Sir, you cannot feel my situation.

Plant. Oh! yes, I can. We have a hundred such cases just after a voyage; but they never last long on land. 'Tis amazing how constant a young man is in a ship! But, in two words, will you dispose of her or no?

Inkle. In two words then, meet me here at noon and we'll speak further on this subject: and lest you think I trifle with your business, hear why I wish this pause. Chance threw me, on my passage to your island, among a savage people, deserted—defenceless—cut off from my companions—my life at stake—to this young creature I owe my preservation—she found me like a dying bough, torn from its kindred branches, which, as it droop'd, she moisten'd with her tears.

Plant. Nay, nay, talk like a man of this world.

Inkle. Your patience—And yet your interruption goes to my present feelings; for on our sail to this your island—the thoughts of time mispent—doubt—fears—or call it what you will—have much perplex'd me; and as your spires rose, reflection still rose with them; for here, Sir, lie my interests, great connections, and other weighty matters, which now I need not mention—

Plant. But which her presence here will mar—

Inkle. Even so—And yet the gratitude I owe her—

Plant. Pshaw! So because she preserv'd your life, your gratitude is to make you give up all you have to live upon.

Inkle. Why, in that light indeed—This never struck me yet. I'll think on't.

Plant. Aye, aye, do so—Why, what return can the wench wish more than taking her from a wild, idle, savage people, and providing for her here with reputable hard work, in a genteel, polish'd, tender, christian country?

Inkle. Well, Sir, at noon.

Plant. I'll meet you—but remember, young gentleman, you must get her off your hands—you must indeed. [Exit.

Inkle. Trudge.

Trudge. Sir.

Inkle. Have you provided a proper apartment?

Trudge. Yes, Sir, at the Crown, here; a neat spruce room, they tell me. You have not seen such a convenient lodging this good while, I believe.

Inkle. Well, run to the end of the quay and conduct Yarico hither, the road is straight before you. You can't miss it.

Trudge. Very well, Sir. What a fine thing it is to turn one's back on a master without running into a wolf's belly! One can follow one's nose on a message here, and be sure it won't be bit off by the way. [*Exit.*]

Inkle. Let me reflect a little.—My interest, honour, engagements to Narcissa, all demand it. My father's precepts too; I can remember when I was a boy what pains he took to mould me!—From morn to night—the burthen of his song was—Prudence! Prudence! Thomas, and you'll rise.—Early he taught me numbers, which he said—and he said rightly—wou'd give me a quick view of loss and profit, and banish from my mind those idle impulses of passion which mark young thoughtless spend-thrifts; his maxims rooted in my heart, and as I grew—they grew; till I was reckon'd among our friends, a steady, sober, solid, good young man; and all the neighbours call'd me *the prudent Mr. Thomas*. And shall I now at once kick down the character which I have rais'd so warily!—Part with her — “sell her,” — The thought once struck me in our cabin as she lay sleeping by me; but in her slumbers she past her arm around me, murmur'd a blessing on my name, and broke my meditations.

Enter Yarico and Trudge.

Yar. My love!

Trudge. I have been shewing her all the wigs and bales of goods we met on the quay, Sir.

Yar. Oh! I have feasted my eyes on wonders.

Trudge. And I'll go feast on a slice of beef, in the Inn here. [Exit.

Yar. My mind has been so busy, that I almost forgot even you: I wish you had staid with me—You wou'd have seen such sights!

Inkle. Those sights are grown familiar to me, Yarico.

Yar. And yet I wish they were not—You might partake my pleasures—but now again, methinks, I will not wish so—for, with too much gazing you might neglect poor Yarico.

Inkle. Nay, nay, my care is still for you.

Yar. I'm sure it is: and if I thought it was not, I'd tell you tales about our poor old grot—bid you remember our Palm-tree near the brook, where in the shade you often stretch'd yourself, while I wou'd take your head upon my lap, and sing my love to sleep. I know you'll love me then.

SONG.

Our grotto was the sweetest place:

The bending bough, with fragrance blowing,

Wou'd check the brook's impetuous pace,

Which murmur'd to be stopt from flowing.

'Twas there we met, and gaz'd our fill;

Ah! think on this, and love me still!

II.

'Twas then my bosom first knew fear,

Fear to an Indian maid a stranger;

The war song, arrows, hatchet, spear,

All warn'd me of my lover's danger.

For him did cares my bosom fill;

Ah! think on this, and love me still!

[Exeunt.

SCENE, *an Apartment in the house of Sir Christopher Curry.*

Enter Sir Christopher and Medium.

Sir Chr. I tell you, old Medium, you are all wrong. Plague on your doubts! Inkle shall have my Narcissa. Poor fellow! I dare say he is finely chagrin'd at this temporary parting—eat up with blue devils, I warrant.

Med. Eat up by the black devils, I warrant, for I left him in hellish hungry company.

Sir Chr. Pshaw! he'll arrive with the next vessel, depend on't—besides, have not I had this in view ever since they were children! I must and will have it so, I tell you. Is not it, as it were, a marriage made above! They *shall* meet, I'm positive.

Med. Shall they! Then they must meet where the marriage was made, for, hang me! if I think it will ever happen below.

Sir Chr. Ha!—and if that is the case—I think you'll never be at the celebration of it.

Med. Yet, let me tell you, Sir Christopher Curry, my character is as unsullied as a sheet of white paper.

Sir Chr. Well said, old fool's-cap, and it's as mere a blank as a sheet of white paper—You are honest, old Medium, by comparison, just as a fellow sentenc'd to transportation is happier than his companion condemn'd to the gallows—Very worthy because you are no rogue: tender hearted, because

you never go to fires and executions; and an affectionate father and husband, because you never pinch your children, or kick your wife out of bed.

Med. And that, as the world goes, is more than every man can say for himself—But you're always so hasty : amongst the hodge-podge of your foibles, passion is always predominant.

Sir Chr. So much the better—Foibles, quotha! foibles are foils that give additional lustre to the gems of virtue; you have not so many foils as I, perhaps.

Med. And, what's more, I don't want 'em, Sir Christopher, I thank you.

Sir Chr. Very true; for the devil a gem have you to set off with 'em.

Med. Well, well; I never mention errors; that, I flatter myself, is no disagreeable quality—It don't become me to say you are hot.

Sir Chr. 'Sblood! but it does become you : it becomes every man, especially an Englishman, to speak the dictates of his heart.

Enter Servant.

Serv. An English vessel, Sir, is just arriv'd in the harbour.

Sir Chr. A vessel! Od's my life!—Now for the news—If it is but as I hope—Any dispatches?

Serv. This letter, Sir, brought by a sailor from the quay. [Exit.

Sir Chr. (opening the letter) Huzza! here it is. He's safe—safe and sound at Barbadoes.

(*Reading*) — Sir,

“ My master, Mr. Inkle, is just arriv’d in your
“ harbour.

Here, read, read, old Medium.

“ Med. (*Reading*) ‘Um’ — Your harbour — we
“ were taken up by an English vessel on the 14th ult.
“ He only waits till I have puff’d his hair to pay his
“ respects to you, and Miss Narcissa. In the mean
“ time he has order’d me to brush up this letter for
“ your honour, from

“ Your humble Servant to command,
TIMOTHY TRUDGE.

Sir Chr. Hey day! Here’s a stile! the voyage has jumbled the fellow’s brains out of their places; the water has made his head turn round; but no matter; mine turns round too. I’ll go and prepare Narcissa directly; they shall be married slap-dash as soon as he comes from the quay. From Neptune to Hymen, from the hammock to the bridal-bed. Ha! old boy!

Med. Well, well; don’t flurry yourself—you’re so hot.

Sir Chr. Hot! ‘Sblood! an’t I in the West Indies? An’t I Governor of Barbadoes? He shall have her as soon as he sets his foot on shore. His hair puff’d! He ought to have been puffing here out of breath by this time.

Med. Very true.

Sir Chr. Well, now do, my good fellow, run down to the shore, and see what detains him.

(*Hurrying him off*)

Med. Well, well; I will, I will. [Exit,

Sir Chr. In the mean time I'll get ready Narcissa; and all shall be concluded in a second. My heart's set upon it.—Poor fellow! after all his rumbles, and tumbles, and jumbles, and fits of despair—I shall be rejoic'd to see him: I have not seen him since he was that high. But, zounds! he's so tardy!

Enter Servant.

Serv. A strange Gentleman, Sir, come from the quay, desires to see you.

Sir Chr. From the quay! Od's my life!—'Tis he—'Tis Inkle! Shew him up, directly. (*Exit servant*) The rogue is expeditious after all—I'm so happy!

Enter Campley.

My dear Fellow (*embracing him—shakes hands*) I'm rejoic'd to see you. Welcome! welcome here, with all my soul.

Camp. This reception, Sir Christopher, is beyond my warmest wishes—Unknown to you—

Sir Chr. Aye, aye; we shall be better acquainted by and by. Well, and how, eh! Tell me—But old Medium and I have talk'd over your affair a hundred times a day, ever since Narcissa arriv'd.

Camp. You surprize me! Are you then really acquainted with the whole affair?

Sir Chr. Every tittle.

Camp. And, can you, Sir, pardon what is past?—

Sir Chr. Pooh! how cou'd you help it?

Camp. Very true—sailing in the same ship—and—when you consider the past state of my mind—the black prospect before me—

Sir Chr. Ha! ha! black enough, I dare say.

Camp. The difficulty I have felt in bringing myself face to face to you.

Sir Chr. That I am convinc'd of—but I knew you wou'd come the first opportunity.

Camp. Very true: yet the distance between the Governor of Barbadoes and myself—(*bowing*)

Sir Chr. Yes—a devilish way asunder.

Camp. Granted, Sir—which has distress'd me with the cruellest doubts as to our meeting.

Sir Chr. 'Twas a toss up.

Camp. The old gentleman seems devilish kind—Now to soften him. (*aside.*) Perhaps, Sir, in your younger days, you may have been in the same situation yourself.

Sir Chr. Who! I! 'sblood! no, never in my life.

Camp. I wish you had, with all my soul, Sir Christopher.

Sir Chr. Upon my soul, Sir, I'm very much obliged to you. (*bowing*)

Camp. As what I now mention might have greater weight with you.

Sir Chr. Pooh! prithee! I tell you I pitied you from the bottom of my heart.

Camp. Indeed! if, with your leave, I may still venture to mention Miss Narcissa—

Sir Chr. An impatient, sensible young dog! like me to a hair! Set your heart at rest, my boy. She's yours; yours before to-morrow morning.

Camp. Amazement! I can scarce believe my senses.

Sir Chr. Zounds! you ought to be out of your senses; but dispatch—make short work of it ever while you live, my boy.

Enter Narcissa and Patty.

Here, girl: here's your swain. (*to Narcissa*)

Camp. I just parted with my Narcissa on the quay, Sir.

Sir Chr. Did you! Ah! sly dog—had a meeting before you came to the old Gentleman—But here—Take him and make much of him—and, for fear of further separations, you shall e'en be tack'd together directly. What say you, girl?

Camp. Will Narcissa consent to my happiness?

Nar. I always obey my father's commands with pleasure, Sir. (*aside to Patty*) "Steal out, Patty, "as soon as you can, and prevent Mr. Inkle's "appearance. My father has mistaken Campley, I "am confident.

"*Patty.* It is not for his daughter, Ma'am, to "tell him of his mistakes, you know."

Sir Chr. Od! I'm so happy, I hardly know which way to turn; but we'll have the carriage directly; drive down to the quay; trundle old Spintext into church, and hey for matrimony!

Camp. With all my heart, Sir Christopher, the sooner the better.

Sir CHRISTOPHER, CAMPLEY, NARCISSA, PATTY.

Sir Chr. Your Colinettes and Ariettes,

Your Damons of the grove,

Who like Fallals and Pastorals

Waste years in love!

But modern folks know better jokes,

And, courting once begun,

To church they hop at once—and pop—

Egad, all's done!

All. In life we prance a country dance,
Where every couple stands;
Their partners set—a while curvet—
But soon join hands.

Nar. When at our feet, so trim and neat,
The powder'd lover sues,
He vows he dies, the lady sighs,
But can't refuse.
Ah! how can she unmov'd e'er see
Her swain his death incur?
If once the squire is seen expire,
He lives with her.

All. In life, &c. &c.

Patty. When John and Bet are fairly met,
John boldly tries his luck;
He steals a buss, without more fuss,
The bargain's struck.
Whilst things below are going so,
Is Betty, pray, to blame?
Who knows, up stairs her mistress fares
Just, just the same.

All. In life, we prance, &c. &c. [Exeunt.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I. *The Quay.**Enter Patty.*

MERCY on us! what a walk I have had of it! Well, matters go on swimmingly at the governor's. The old gentleman has order'd the carriage, and the young couple will be whisk'd here to the church in a quarter of an hour. My business is to prevent young Sobersides, young Inkle, from appearing to interrupt the ceremony—Ha! here's the Crown, where I hear he is hous'd. So now to find Trudge, and trump up a story in the true stile of a chambermaid. (*goes into the house*) (*Patty within*) I tell you it don't signify, and I will come up. (*Trudge within*) But it does signify, and you can't come up.

Re-enter Patty, with Trudge.

Patty. You had better say at once, I shan't.

Trudge. Well then, you shan't.

Patty. Savage! pretty behaviour you have pick'd up amongst the Hottypots! your London civility, like London itself, will soon be lost in smoak, Mr. Trudge; and the politeness you have studied so long in Threadneedle-street, blotted out by the blacks you have been living with.

Trudge. No such thing; I practis'd my politeness all the while I was in the woods. Our very lodging taught me good manners; for I could never bring myself to go into it without bowing.

Patty. Don't tell me! A mighty civil reception you give a body, truly, after a six weeks parting!

Trudge. Gad! you're right; I am a little out here, to be sure. (*kisses her*) Well, how do you do?

Patty. Pshaw, fellow! I want none of your kisses.

Trudge. Oh! very, well—I'll take it again. (*offers to kiss her*)

Patty. Be quiet. I want to see Mr. Inkle. I have a message to him from Miss Narcissa. I shall get a sight of him now, I believe.

Trudge. May be not. He's a little busy at present.

Patty. Busy, ha! plodding! What, he's at his multiplication table again?

Trudge. Very likely; so it would be a pity to interrupt him, you know.

Patty. Certainly; and the whole of my business was to prevent his hurrying himself—Tell him, we shan't be ready to receive him at the Governor's till to-morrow: d'ye hear?

Trudge. No!

Patty. No. Things are not prepared. The place isn't in order; and the servants have not had proper notice of his arrival.

Trudge. Oh! let me alone to give the servants notice—Rat—Tat—Tat—I'ts all the notice we had in Threadneedle-street of the arrival of a visitor.

Patty. Threadneedle street! Threadneedle nonsense: I'd have you to know we do every thing with an air. Matters have taken another turn—Stile, Stile, Sir, is required here, I promise you.

Trudge. Turn-Stile! and pray, what stile will serve your turn now, Madam Patty?

Patty. A due dignity and decorum, to be sure ; Sir Christopher intends Mr. Inkle, you know, for his-son-in-law, and must receive him in public form (which can't be till to-morrow morning) for the honour of his governorship : why, the whole island will ring of it.

Trudge. The devil it will !

Patty. Yes ; they've talk'd of nothing but my mistress's beauty and fortune for these six weeks. Then he'll be introduc'd to the bride, you know.

Trudge. Oh ! my poor master !

Patty. Then a public breakfast ; then a procession ; then—if nothing happens to prevent it, he'll get into church, and be married in a crack.

Trudge. Then he'll get into a damn'd scrape in a crack.

Patty. Hey-day ! a scrape ! The holy state of matrimony !

Trudge. Yes ; it's plaguy holy ; and many of its votaries, as in other holy states, live in repentance and mortification. Ah ! poor Madam Yarico ! My poor pilgarlic of a master, what will become of him ! (*half aside*)

Patty. Why, what's the matter with the booby ?

Trudge. Nothing, nothing—he'll be hang'd for polibigamy.

Patty. Polly, who ?

Trudge. It must out—Patty !

Patty. Well.

Trudge. Can you keep a secret ?

Patty. Try me.

Trudge. Then (*whispering*) my master keeps a girl.

Patty. Oh! monstrous! another woman!

Trudge. As sure as one and one makes two.

Patty. (*aside*) Rare news for my mistress!—Why, I can hardly believe it: the grave, sly, steady, sober M. Inkle, do such a thing!

Trudge. Pooh! it's always your sly, sober fellows, that go the most after the girls.

Patty. Well; I should sooner suspect *you*.

Trudge. Me! Oh Lord! he! he!—do you think any smart, tight, little black-ey'd wench wou'd be struck with my figure? (*conceitedly*)

Patty. Pshaw! never mind your figure. Tell me how it happen'd?

Trudge. You shall hear: when the ship left us ashore, my master turn'd as pale as a sheet of paper. It isn't every body that's blest with courage, *Patty*.

Patty. True.

Trudge. However, I bid him cheer up; told him to stick to my elbow: took the lead, and began our march.

Patty. Well.

Trudge. We hadn't gone far, when a damn'd one ey'd black boar, that grinn'd like a devil, came down the hill in a jog trot! My master melted as fast as a pot of pomatum!

Patty. Mercy on us!

Trudge. But what does I do, but whips out my desk knife, that I us'd to cut the quills with at home; met the monster, and slit up his throat like a pen—The boar bled like a pig.

Patty. Lord! *Trudge*, what a great traveller you are!

Trudge. Yes, I remember we fed on the flitch for a week.

Patty. Well, well; but the Lady?

Trudge. The Lady! O true. By and by we came to a cave—a large hollow room, under ground. Well, there we were half an hour, before I could get him to go in; there's no accounting for fear, you know. At last, in we went to a place hung round with skins, as it might be a furrier's shop, and there was a fine Lady snoring on a bow and arrows.

Patty. What, all alone?

Trudge. Eh!—No—no—no. Hum! she had a young lion by way of lap-dog.

Patty. Gemini! what did you do?

Trudge. Gave her a jog, and she open'd her eyes—she struck my master immediately.

Patty. Mercy on us! with what?

Trudge. With her beauty, you Ninny, to be sure; and they soon brought matters to bear. The wolves witness'd the contract.—I gave her away—The crows croak'd Amen; and we had board and lodging for nothing.

Patty. And this is she he has brought to Barbadoes?

Trudge. The same.

Patty. Well; and tell me Trudge; she's pretty, you say—Is she fair or brown? or—

Trudge. Um! she's of a good comely copper.

Patty. How! a Tawny?

Trudge. Yes; quite dark; but very elegant.

Patty. Oh! the monster! the filthy fellow! Live with a black-a-moor!

Trudge. Why, there's no great harm in't, I hope.

Patty. Faugh! I wou'dn't let him kiss me for the world: he'd make my face all smutty.

Trudge. Zounds! you are mighty nice all of a sudden; but I'd have you to know, Madam Patty, that Black-a-moor Ladies, as you call 'em, are some of the very few whose complexions never rub off: 'Sbud! if they did, Wows and I shou'd have chang'd faces by this time — But mum — not a word for your life.

Patty. Not I; except to the governor and family. (*aside*) But I must run—and, remember, Trudge, if your master has made a mistake here, he has himself to thank for his pains.

SONG.

Tho' lovers, like marksmen, all aim at the heart,
Some hit wide of the mark, as we wenches all know;
But of all the shots, he's the worst in the art
Who shoots at a pigeon and kills a crow. Oho! —
Your master has kill'd a crow.

II.

When younkers go out, the first time in their lives,
At random they shoot, and let fly as they go:
So your master, unskill'd how to level at wives,
Has shot at a pigeon and kill'd a crow.
Oho! &c.

III.

Love and money thus wasted in terrible trim;
His powder is spent, and his shot running low:
Yet the pigeon he miss'd, I've a notion, with him
Will never, for such a mistake, pluck a crow.

No! no!

Your master may keep his crow!

[Exit *Patty*

L

Trudge. Pshaw! these girls are so plaguy proud of their white and red! but I won't be shamed out of Wows, that's flat. Master, to be sure, while we were in the forest, taught Yarico to read with his pencil and pocket-book. What then! Wows comes on fine and fast in her lessons. A little awkward at first, to be sure.—Ha! ha!—She's so us'd to feed with her hands, that I can't get her to eat her victuals in a genteel Christian way for the soul of me: when she has stuck a morsel on her fork, she don't know how to guide it; but pops up her knuckles to her mouth, and the meat goes up to her ear. But, no matter — After all the fine flashy London girls, Wowski's the wench for my money.

SONG.

A clerk I was in London gay,
 Jemmy linkum feedle,
 And went in boots to see the play,
 Merry fiddlum tweedle,
 I march'd the lobby, twirl'd my stick,
 Diddle, daddle, deedle;
 The girls all cry'd, "*He's quite the kick,*
 Oh! Jemmy linkum feedle.

II.

Hey! for America sail!
 Yankee doodle deedle;
 The sailer boys cry'd, "*smoak his tail!*"
 Jemmy linkum feedle.
 On English belles I turn'd my back,
 Diddle, daddle, deedle;
 And got a foreign Fair, quite Black.
 Oh! twaddle, twaddle tweedle!

III.

Your London girls, with roguish trip,
 Wheedle, wheedle, wheedle,
 Boast their pouting under-lip,
 Fiddle, faddle, feedle.
 My Wows wou'd beat a hundred such,
 Diddle, daddle, deedle,
 Whose upper-lip pouts twice as much,
 Oh! pretty double wheedle.

IV.

Rings I'll buy to deck her toes,
 Jemmy linkum feedle;
 A feather fine shall grace her nose,
 Waving sidle seedle;
 With jealousy I ne'er shall burst,
 Who'd steal my bone of bone-a?
 A white Othello, I can trust
 A dinky Desdemona. [*Exit.*

SCENE II. *A Room in the Crown.*

Enter Inkle.

I know not what to think; I have given her distant hints of parting, but still so strong her confidence in my affection, she prattles on without regarding me. Poor Yarico! I must not—cannot quit her. When I wou'd speak, her looks, her mere simplicity disarms me; I dare not wound such innocence. Simplicity is like a smiling babe, which to the ruffian that wou'd murder it, stretching its little naked, helpless arms, pleads speechless its own cause. And yet—Narcissa's family.

Enter Trudge.

Trudge. There he is, like a beau, bespeaking a

coat—doubting which colour to chuse—Sir—

Inkle. What now?

Trudge. Nothing unexpected, Sir—I hope you won't be angry.

Inkle. Angry!

Trudge. I'm sorry for it; but I am come to give you joy, Sir!

Inkle. Joy! of what?

Trudge. A wife, Sir; a white one—I know it will vex you, but Miss Narcissa means to make you happy to morrow morning.

Inkle. To morrow!

Trudge. Yes, Sir; and as I have been out of employ, in both my capacities lately, after I have dress'd your hair, I may draw up the marriage articles.

Inkle. Whence comes your intelligence, Sir?

Trudge. Patty told me all that has past at the Governor's family on the quay, Sir. Women, you know, can never keep a secret. You'll be introduc'd in form with the whole island to witness it.

Inkle. So public too!—Unlucky!

Trudge. There will be nothing but rejoicings in compliment to the wedding, she tells me; all noise and uproar! married people like it, they say.

Inkle. Strange! that I shou'd be so blind to my interest as to be the only person this distresses!

Trudge. They are talking of nothing else but the match, it seems.

Inkle. Confusion! how can I, in honour retract!

Trudge. And the bride's merits—

Inkle. True!—A fund of merits—I wou'd not—

but from necessity—a case so nice as this—I—wou'dn't wish to retract.

Trudge. Then they call her so handsome.

Inkle. Very true; so handsome! the whole world wou'd laugh at me: they'd call it folly to retract.

Trudge. And then they say so much of her fortune.

Inkle. O death! it wou'd be *madness* to retract. Surely, my faculties have slept, and this long parting from my Narcissa has blunted my sense of her accomplishments. 'Tis this alone makes me so weak and wavering. I'll see her immediately. (*going*)

Trudge. Stay, stay, Sir; I am desir'd to tell you, the Governor won't open his gates to us till to-morrow morning, and is now making preparations to receive you at breakfast, with all the honours of matrimony.

Inkle. Well be it so; it will give me time, at all events, to put my affairs in train.

Trudge. Yes; it's a short respite before execution; and if your honour was to go and comfort poor Madam Yarico—

Inkle. Damnation! Scoundrel! how dare you offer your advice!—I dread to think of her.

Trudge. I've done, Sir, I've done—But I know I should blubber over Wows all night, if I thought of parting with her in the morning.

Inkle. Insolence! begone, Sir!

Trudge. Lord! Sir, I only—

Inkle. Get down stairs, Sir, directly.

Trudge. (*going out*) Ah! you may well put your head to your hand; and a bad head it must

be, to forget that Madam Yarico prevented her countrymen from peeling off the upper part of it.
(*aside*) [Exit.

Inkle. 'Sdeath! what am I about! how have I slumbered! Is it I—I—who in London laugh'd at the younkers of the town—and when I saw their chariots, with some fine tempting girl perk'd in the corner, come shopping to the city, wou'd cry—Ah!—there sits ruin—there flies the Greenhorn's money! then wonder'd with myself how men cou'd trifle time on women: or, indeed, think of any women without fortunes. And now, forsooth, it rests with me to turn romantic puppy, and give up All for Love. Give up!—O monstrous folly!—thirty thousand pounds!

Trudge. (*peeping in at the door*)

Trudge. May I come in, Sir?

Inkle. What does the booby want?

Trudge. Sir, your uncle wants to see you.

Inkle. Mr. Medium! Shew him up directly.

[Exit Trudge.

He must know of this. To-morrow!—I wish this marriage were more distant, that I might break it by degrees. She'd take my purpose better, were it less suddenly deliver'd.

Enter Medium.

Med. Ah! here he is! Give me your hand, Nephew! welcome, welcome to Barbadoes, with all my heart!

Inkle. I am glad to meet you here, Uncle.

Med. That you are, that you are, I'm sure; Lord!

Lord! when we parted last, how I wish'd we were in a room together, if it were but the black hole! I have not been able to sleep o'nights for thinking of you. I've lain awake and fancied I saw you sleeping your last, with your head in a lion's mouth for a night cap; and I've never seen a bear brought over to dance about the street, but I thought you might be bobbing up and down in its belly.

Inkle. I am very much oblig'd to you.

Med. Ay, ay, I am happy enough to find you safe and sound, I promise you. But you have a fine prospect before you now, young man; I am come to take you with me to Sir Christopher, who is impatient to see you.

Inkle. To-morrow he expects me.

Med. To-morrow! directly—this moment—in half a second—I left him standing on tip-toe, as he calls it, to embrace you; and he's standing on tip-toe now, in the great parlour, and there he'll stand till you come to him.

Inkle. Is he so hasty?

Med. Hasty! he's all pepper—and wonders you are not with him, before it's possible to get at him. Hasty indeed! Why, he vows you shall have his daughter this very night.

Inkle. What a situation!

Med. Why, it's hardly fair just after a voyage. But come, bustle, bustle, he'll think you neglect him. He's rare and touchy, I can tell you; and if he once takes it into his head that you shew the least slight to his daughter, it would knock up all your schemes in a minute.

Inkle. Confusion! If he should hear of Yarico!
(*aside*)

Med. But at present you are all and all with him; he has been telling me his intentions these six weeks; you'll be a fine warm husband, I promise you.

Inkle. This cursed connection! (*aside*)

Med. It is not for me though to tell you how to play your cards; you are a prudent young man, and can make calculations in a wood.

Inkle. Fool! fool! fool! (*aside*)

Med. Why, what the devil is the matter with you!

Inkle. It must be done effectually, or all is lost; mere parting would not conceal it. (*aside*)

Med. Ah! now he's got to his damn'd Square Root again, I suppose, and Old Nick would not move him—Why, nephew!

Inkle. The planter that I spoke with cannot be arriv'd—but time is precious—the first I meet—common prudence now demands it. I'm fix'd; I'll part with her. (*aside*) [Exit.

Med. Damn me! but he's mad. The woods have turn'd the poor boy's brains; he's scalp'd, and gone crazy! Holo! Inkle! Nephew! Gad! I'll spoil your arithmetic, I warrant me. [Exit.

SCENE, *The Quay.*

Enter Sir Christopher Curry.

Sir Chr. Od's my life! I can scarce contain my happiness; I've left 'em safe in church in the middle of the ceremony; I ought to have given Narcissa

away, they told me, but I caper'd about so much for joy, that Old Spintext advised me to go and cool my heels on the quay till it was all over. Odt, I'm so happy; and they shall see now what an old fellow can do at a wedding.

Enter Inkle.

Inkle. Now for dispatch! Hark'ee, old gentleman!
(*to the Governor*)

Sir Chr. Well, young gentleman!

Inkle. If I mistake not, I know your business here.

Sir Chr. 'Egad, I believe half the island knows it before this time.

Inkle. Then to the point—I have a female whom I wish to part with.

Sir Chr. Very likely; it's a common case now a days with many a man.

Inkle. If you could satisfy me you wou'd use her mildly, and treat her with more kindness than is usual—for I can tell you, she's of no common stamp—perhaps we might agree.

Sir Chr. Oho! a slave! Faith, now I think on't; my daughter may want an attendant or two extraordinary; and as you say she's a delicate girl, above the common run, and none of your thick-lip'd, flat-nos'd, squabby, dumpling dowdies, I don't much care if—

Inkle. And for her treatment—

Sir Chr. Look ye, young man, I love to be plain; I shall treat her a good deal better than you wou'd, I fancy; for though I witness this custom every day, I can't help thinking the only excuse for buying

our fellow creatures, is to rescue 'em from the hands of those who are unfeeling enough to bring 'em to market.

Inkle. Fair words, old gentleman; an Englishman won't put up an affront.

Sir Chr. An Englishman! More shame for you. Men who so fully feel the blessings of liberty are doubly cruel in depriving the helpless of their freedom.

Inkle. Let me assure you, Sir, 'tis not my occupation, but for a private reason; an instant pressing necessity—

Sir Chr. Well, well, I have a pressing necessity too; I can't stand to talk now; I expect company here presently, but if you'll ask for me to-morrow at the Castle—

Inkle. The Castle!

Sir Chr. Aye, Sir, the Castle, the Governor's Castle, known all over Barbadoes.

Inkle. 'Sdeath! this man must be on the Governor's establishment; his steward, perhaps, and sent after me while Sir Christopher is impatiently waiting for me. I've gone too far; my secret may be known—As 'tis, I'll win this fellow to my interest. (*to him*) One word more, Sir: my business must be done immediately; and as you seem acquainted at the Castle, if you should see me there—and there I mean to sleep to-night—

Sir Chr. The Devil you do!

Inkle. Your finger on your lips: and never breathe a syllable of this transaction.

Sir Chr. No! Why not?

Inkle. Because, for reasons which perhaps you'll know to-morrow, I might be injur'd with the Governor, whose most particular friend I am.

Sir Chr. So, here's a particular friend of mine, coming to sleep at my house, that I never saw in my life. I'll sound this fellow. (*aside*) I fancy, young gentleman, as you are such a bosom friend of the Governor's, you can hardly do any thing to alter your situation with him?

Inkle. Oh! pardon me; but you'll find that hereafter—besides you, doubtless, know his character?

Sir Chr. Oh! as well as I do my own. But let's understand one another. You may trust me, now, you've gone so far. You are acquainted with his character, no doubt, to a hair?

Inkle. I am—I see we shall understand each other. You know him too, I see, as well as I—A very touchy, testy, hot old fellow.

Sir Chr. Here's a scoundrel! I hot and touchy! Zounds! I can hardly contain my passion!—But I won't discover myself. I'll see the bottom of this—(*to him*) Well now, as we seem to have come to a tolerable explanation—let's proceed to business—bring me the woman.

Inkle. No; there you must excuse me. I rather wou'd avoid seeing her more; and wish it to be settled without my seeming interference. My presence might distress her—You conceive me.

Sir Chr. Zounds! what an unfeeling rascal!—The poor girl's in love with him, I suppose. No, no, fair and open. My dealing's with you, and you only; I see her now or I declare off.

Inkle. Well then, you must be satisfied; yonder's my servant—ha!—a thought has struck me—Come here, Sir.

Enter Trudge.

I'll write my purpose, and send it her by him—It's lucky that I taught her to decypher characters; my labour now is paid—This is somewhat less abrupt; 'twill soften matters—*(to himself) (takes out his pocket book and writes)* Give this to Yarico; then bring her hither with you.

Trudge. I shall, Sir. *(going)*

Inkle. Stay; come back. This soft fool, if uninstructed, may add to her distress; his driveling sympathy may feed her grief instead of soothing it.—When she has read this paper, seem to make light of it; tell her it is a thing of course, done purely for her good. I here inform her that I must part with her. D'ye understand your lesson?

Trudge. Pa—part with Ma—madam Yar-i-co?

Inkle. Why does the blockhead stammer!—I have my reasons. No muttering—And let me tell you, Sir, if your rare bargain were gone too, 'twou'd be the better; she may babble our story of the forest, and spoil my fortune.

Trudge. I'm sorry for it, Sir; I've liv'd with you a long while: I've half a year's wages too due the 25th ult. due for dressing your hair and scribbling your parchments; but take my scribbling; take my frizzing; take my wages; and I and Wows will take ourselves off together—she sav'd my life, and rot me! Sir, if any thing but death shall part us.

Inkle. Impertinent! Go, and deliver your message.

Trudge. I'm gone, Sir. Lord, Lord! I never carried a letter with such ill will in all my born days.
[Exit.]

Sir Chr. Well—shall I see the girl?

Inkle. She'll be here presently. One thing I had forgot; when she is yours, I need not caution you, after the hints I've given, to keep her from the castle. If Sir Christopher should see her, 'twould lead, you know, to a discovery of what I wish conceal'd.

Sir Chr. Depend upon *me*—Sir Christopher will know no more of our meeting, than he does at this moment.

Inkle. Your secrecy shall not be unrewarded; I'll recommend you particularly to his good graces.

Sir Chr. Thank ye, thank ye; but I'm pretty much in his good graces as it is: I don't know any body he has a greater respect for—

Re-enter Trudge.

Inkle. Now, Sir, have you perform'd your message?

Trudge. Yes, I gave her the letter.

Inkle. And where is Yarico? did she say she'd come? didn't you do as you were order'd? didn't you speak to her?

Trudge. I cou'dn't, Sir, I cou'dn't—I intended to say what you bid me—but, I felt such a pain in my throat, I cou'dn't speak a word for the soul of me, and so, Sir, I fell a crying.

Inkle. Blockhead!

Sir Chr. 'Sblood! but he's a very honest block-

head. Tell me, my good fellow — what said the wench?

Trudge. Nothing at all, Sir. She sat down with her two hands clasp'd on her knees, and look'd so pitifully in my face, I cou'd not stand it. Oh! here she comes, I'll go and find Wows. If I must be melancholy, she shall keep me company. [*Exit.*

Sir Chr. Oh! here she comes. Od's my life! as comely a wench, as ever I saw.

Enter Yarico, who looks some time in Inkle's face, bursts into tears, and falls on his neck.

Inkle. In tears! nay, Yarico! why this?

Yar. Oh! do not—do not leave me!

Inkle. Why, simple girl! I'm labouring for your good. My interest here is nothing; I can do nothing from myself: you are ignorant of our country's customs. I must give way to men more powerful who will not have me with you. But see, my Yarico, ever anxious for your welfare, I've found a kind, good person, who will protect you.

Yar. Ah! why you not protect me?

Inkle. I have no means—how can I?

Yar. Just as I shelter'd you. Take me to yonder mountain, where I see no smoke from tall high houses, fill'd with your cruel countrymen. None of your princes there will come to take me from you. And shou'd they stray that way, we'll find a lurking place, just like my own poor cave, where many a day I sat beside you, and bless'd the chance that brought you to it—that I might save your life.

Sir Chr. His life! Zounds! my blood boils at the scoundrel's ingratitude!

Yar. Come, come, let's go. I always fear'd these cities. Let's fly and seek the woods; and there we'll wander hand in hand together. No cares will vex us then—We'll let the day glide by in idleness, and you shall sit in the shade, and watch the sun-beam playing on the brook, while I will sing the song that pleases you. No cares, Love, but for food—and we'll live cheerily, I warrant—In the fresh early morning you shall hunt down our game, and I will pick you berries—and then, at night, I'll trim our bed of leaves, and lie me down in peace—Oh! we shall be so happy!

Inkle. Hear me, Yarico. My countrymen and yours differ as much in minds as in complexions. We were not born to live in woods and caves—to seek subsistence by pursuing beasts—We Christians, girl, hunt money, a thing unknown to you. But here, 'tis money which brings us ease, plenty, command, power, every thing, and of course happiness. You are the bar to my attaining this; therefore 'tis necessary for my good—and which I think you value—

Yar. You know I do; so much, that it wou'd break my heart to leave you.

Inkle. But we must part. If you are seen with me, I shall lose all.

Yar. I gave up all for you—my friends—my country: all that is dear to me: and still grown dearer since you shelter'd there—All, all was left for you, and were it now to do again—again I'd

cross the seas, and follow you all the world over.

Inkle. We idle time; Sir, she is yours. See you obey this gentleman; 'twill be the better for you.
(going)

Yar. O barbarous!—(holding him) Do not, do not abandon me.

Inkle. No more.

Yar. Stay but a little; protect me but a little—and I'll obey this man, and undergo all hardships for your good; stay but to witness 'em. I soon shall sink with grief; tarry till then; and hear me bless your name when I am dying; and beg you now and then, when I am gone, to heave a sigh for your poor Yarico.

Inkle. I dare not listen. You, Sir, I hope, will take good care of her. (going)

Sir Chr. Care of her!—that I will—I'll cherish her like my own daughter, and pour balm into the heart of a poor innocent girl, that has been wounded by the artifices of a scoundrel.

Inkle. Ha! 'Sdeath! Sir, how dare you!—

Sir Chr. 'Sdeath! Sir, how dare you look an honest man in the face!—

Inkle. Sir, you shall feel—

Sir Chr. Feel! It's more than ever you did, I believe; mean, sordid wretch! dead to all sense of honour, gratitude, or humanity—I never heard of such barbarity! I have a son-in-law, who has been left in the same situation, but, if I thought him capable of such cruelty, dam'me! if I wou'd not turn him to sea with a peck loaf in a cockle shell—Come, come! cheer up, my girl. You shan't

want a friend to protect you, I warrant you. (*taking Yarico by the hand*)

Inkle, Insolence! The Governor shall hear of this insult.

Sir Chr. The Governor! lyar! cheat! rogue! impostor! breaking all ties you ought to keep, and pretending to those you have no right to. The Governor had never such a fellow in the whole catalogue of his acquaintance—the Governor disowns you—the Governor disclaims you—the Governor abhors you; and, to your utter confusion, here stands the Governor to tell you so! Here stands old Curry, who never talk'd to a rogue without telling him what he thought of him!

Inkle. Sir Christopher! Lost and undone!

Med. (*without*) Holo! young Multiplication! Zounds! I've been peeping in every cranny of the house. Why, young Rule of Three! (*enters from the Inn*) Oh! here you are at last!—Ah, Sir Christopher! What, are you there too! impatient I see to wait at home. But here's one that will make you easy, I fancy. (*clapping Inkle on the shoulder*)

Sir Chr. How came you to know him?

Med. Ha! ha! Well, that's curious enough too. So you have been talking here without finding out each other.

Sir Chr. No, no; I have found him out with a vengeance.

Med. Not you. Why, this is the dear boy. It's my nephew; that is, your son-in-law that is to be. It's Inkle!

Sir Chr. It's a lie; and you're a purblind old

booby — and this dear boy is a damn'd scoundrel.

Med. Hey-dey! what's the meaning of this? One was mad before, and he has bit the other, I suppose.

Sir Chr. But here comes the dear boy—the true boy—the jolly boy, piping hot from church, with my daughter.

Enter Campley, Narcissa, and Patty.

Med. Campley?

Sir Chr. Who, Campley!—It's no such thing.

Camp. That's my name, indeed, Sir Christopher.

Sir Chr. The Devil it is! And how came you, Sir, to impose upon me, and assume the name of Inkle? A name which every man of honesty ought to be ashamed of.

Camp. I never did, Sir.—Since I sailed from England with your daughter, my affection has daily encreased; and when I came to explain myself to you, by a number of concurring circumstances, which I am now partly acquainted with, you mistook me for that gentleman. Yet had I even then been aware of your mistake, I must confess the regard for my own happiness would have tempted me to let you remain undeceiv'd.

Sir Chr. And did you, Narcissa, join in—

Nar. How cou'd I, my dear Sir, disobey you?

Patty. Lord! your honour, what young lady could refuse a captain?

Camp. I am a Soldier, Sir Christopher; Love and War, is the soldier's motto; and tho' my income is trifling to your *intended* son-in-law's, still the

chance of war has enabled me to support the object of my love above indigence. Her fortune, Sir Christopher, I do not consider myself by any means entitled to.

Sir Chr. 'Sblood! but you must tho'. Give me your hand, my young Mars, and bless you both together!—Thank you, thank you for cheating an old fool into giving his daughter to a lad of spirit, when he was going to throw her away upon one in whose breast the mean passion of avarice smothers the smallest spark of affection or humanity.

Inkle. Confusion!

Nar. I have this moment heard a story of a transaction in the forest, which, I own, would have rendered a compliance with your former commands very disagreeable.

Patty. Yes, Sir, I have told my mistress he had brought over a Hottypot gentlewoman.

Sir Chr. Yes, but he would have left her for you, (*to Narcissa*) and you for his interest, and sold you, perhaps, as he has this poor girl to me, as a requital for preserving his life.

Nar. How!

Enter Trudge and Wowski.

Trudge. Come along, Wows! take a long, last leave of your poor Mistress: throw your pretty ebony arms about her neck.

Wows. No, no—she not go; you not leave poor Wowski—(*throwing her arms about Yarico*)

Sir Chr. Poor girl! A companion, I take it.

Trudge. A thing of my own, Sir; I cou'dn't help

following my master's example in the woods—*Like master like man.*

Sir Chr. But you wou'd not sell her, and be hang'd to you! you dog, wou'd you?

Trudge. Hang me like a dog if I wou'd, Sir.

Sir Chr. So say I to every fellow that breaks an obligation due to the feelings of a man. But, old Medium, what have you to say for your hopeful nephew?

Med. I never speak ill of my friends, Sir Christopher.

Sir Chr. Pshaw!

Inkle. Then let me speak: hear me defend a conduct—

Sir Chr. Defend! Zounds! plead guilty at once; it's the only hope left of obtaining mercy.

Inkle. Suppose, old Gentleman, you had a son?

Sir Chr. 'Sblood! then I'd make him an honest fellow, and teach him that the feeling heart never knows greater pride than when it's employ'd in giving succour to the unfortunate: I'd teach him to be his father's own son to a hair.

Inkle. Even so my father tutor'd me; from infancy bending my tender mind, like a young sapling, to his will—Interest was the grand prop round which he twin'd my pliant, green affections; taught me in childhood to repeat old sayings—all tending to his own fix'd principles, and the first sentence that I ever lisp'd was: *Charity begins at Home.*

Sir Chr. I shall never like a proverb again as long as I live.

Inkle. As I grew up, he'd prove—and by example—were I in want, I might e'en starve, for what the world cared for their neighbours; why then shou'd I care for the world? Men now liv'd for themselves. These were his doctrines: then, Sir, what wou'd you say, should I, in spite of habit, precept, education, fly in my father's face and spurn his counsels?

Sir Chr. Say! why, that you were a damn'd honest undutiful fellow. Oh! curse such principles! Principles which destroy all confidence between man and man—Principles which none but a rogue could instill, and none but a rogue cou'd imbibe—Principles—

Inkle. Which I renounce.

Sir Chr. Eh!

Inkle. Renounce intirely. Ill-founded precept too long has steeled my breast—but still 'tis vulnerable—this trial was too much—Nature 'gainst Habit combating within me, has penetrated to my heart; a heart, I own, long callous to the feelings of sensibility; but now it bleeds, and bleeds for my poor Yarico. Oh! let me clasp her to it while 'tis glowing, and mingle tears of love and penitence.

(embracing her)

Trudge. (capering about) Wows, give me a kiss!
(Wows goes to Trudge)

Yar. And shall we—shall we be happy?

Inkle. Aye; ever, ever, Yarico.

Yar. I knew we shou'd—and yet I fear'd; but shall I still watch over you! Oh! Love, you, surely, gave your Yarico such pain only to make this happiness the greater.

Wows. (going to Yarico) Oh! Wowski so happy! and yet I think I not glad neither.

Trudge. Eh, Wows! How! why not?

Wows. 'Cause I can't help cry—

Sir Chr. Then, if that's the case—Curse me! if I think I'm very glad either. What the plague's the matter with my eyes! Young man, your hand—I am now proud and happy to shake it.

Med. Well, Sir Christopher, what do you say to my hopeful nephew now?

Sir Chr. Say! Why, confound the fellow! I say, that is ungenerous enough to remember the bad actions of a man who has virtue left in him to repent it—As for you, my good fellow (to Trudge), I must, with your master's permission, employ you myself.

Trudge. O rare!—Bless your honour—Wows! you'll be a Lady, you jade, to a Governor's Factotum.

Wows. Iss—I Lady Facktotum.

Sir Chr. And now, my young folks, we'll drive home, and celebrate the wedding. Od's my life! I long to be shaking a foot at the fiddles, and I shall dance ten times the lighter for reforming an Inkle, while I have it in my power to reward the innocence of a Yarico.

FINALE.

CAMPLEY.

Come let us dance and sing,
While all Barbadoes' bells shall ring:
Love scrapes the fiddle string,

And Venus plays the lute;
Hymen gay foots away,
Happy at our wedding day,
Cocks his chin, and figures in,
To tabor, fife, and flute.

CHORUS.

Come then dance and sing,
While all Barbadoes' bells shall ring, &c.

NARCISSA.

Since thus each anxious care
Is vanish'd into empty air,
Ah! how can I forbear
To join the jocund dance?
To and fro, couples go,
On the light fantastic toe,
While with glee, merrily,
The rosy hours advance.

Chorus.

YARICO.

When first the swelling sea
Hither brought my love and me,
What then my fate wou'd be,
Little did I think—
Doom'd to know care and woe,
Happy still is Yarico,
Since her love will constant prove,
And nobly scorn to shrink.

TRUDGE.

'Sbob's now I'm fix'd for life,
My fortune's fair, tho' black's my wife.
Who fears domestic strife!—

Who cares now a souse!
 Merry cheer my dingy dear
 Shall find with her Factotum here;
 Night and day, I'll frisk and play
 About the house with Wows.

Chorus.

PATTY.

Let Patty say a word,
 A chambermaid may sure be heard.
 Sure men are grown absurd
 Thus taking black for white!
 To hug and kiss a dingy Miss
 Will hardly suit an age like this—
 Unless here, some friends appear,
 Who like this wedding night.

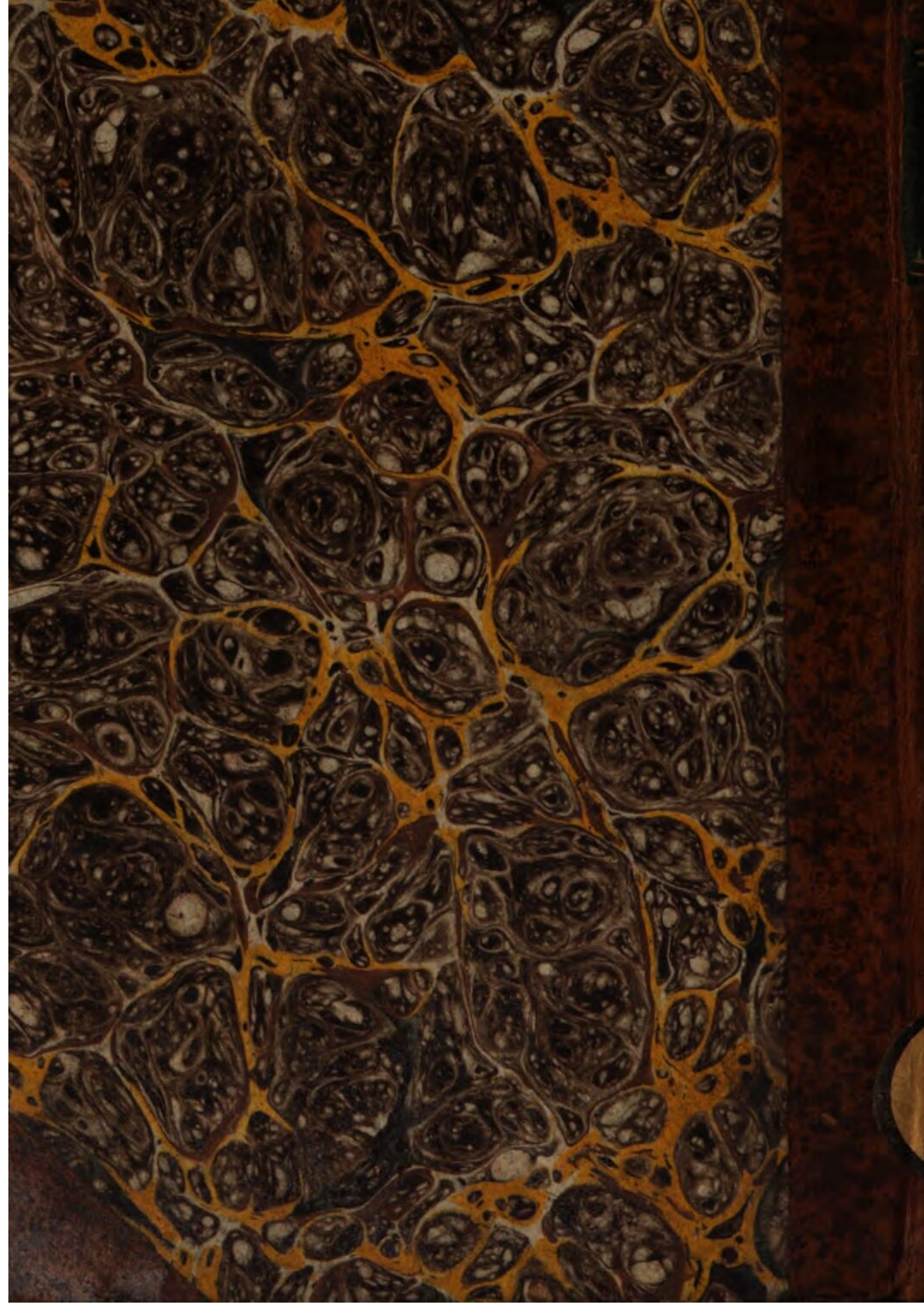
Chorus.

THE END.

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Mason, William

Elfrida a dramatic poem written on the model of the ancient greek tragedy

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